VALLEY VOICE

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Lindsay Council in Group Therapy

Dave Adalian

A dysfunctional, financially embarrassed Lindsay City Council is finally getting some therapy, or at least part of it is, and no one should envy Lindsay Interim City Manager Bill Zigler his job.

If all went as planned, the majority of the Lindsay City Council sat down Tuesday morning with a facilitator, who also happens to be a therapist, for a four-hour session to set goals, define objectives for the city's future and to establish a code of conduct for council members who recently just do not seem to be able to get along. But before that could happen, the five members of the Council spent about half an hour arguing with Zigler about whether someone was needed to smooth the process. In the end, a split Council decided, in a 3-2 vote, that it did.

"We're hoping we can find greater unity," Zigler said at a council meeting earlier this month. What he hoped Tuesday's session would produce is a code of conduct for council members to follow at their meetings. "This is what we do, this is what we don't do, as the Lindsay City Council."

Disagreeing to Agree

The need for a tighter ship of state seems clear in the wake of loud, angry arguments between council members during public meetings. Add to that the sudden departure of City Manager Rich Wilkinson, with a subsequent severance payout the city could not afford, a recently settled wrongful termination lawsuit to a former Lindsay police officer with another large payout, ongoing investigations into the legality of council conduct, staff furloughs and continuing budget deficits that could paralyze city business. Yet, Zigler found himself repeatedly defending the need for an outside facilitator at Tuesday's study and planning session, and for the session itself.

"I don't see the need to hire this (facilitator) you know, because I'm OK whether all five of us do it (vote in favor of an agenda item), or three do it," said Councilman Steve Mecum. "I've been the only one who didn't want to do something, and I'm OK with that. It's not personal to me."

LINDSAY continued on **4 »**

SeaPort Airlines officials and City of Visalia Councilmembers officiated the grand opening of SeaPort service to Visalia on February 9, 2015. File Photo/Valley Voice

Visalia Considers What's Next for Airport in Wake of SeaPort Departure

Nancy Vigran

The sudden departure of SeaPort Airlines and its service has left Visalians in a holding pattern about the future of air service for Tulare County.

SeaPort ended its service to the five California airports it served on Friday, as well as its Kansas routes, without warning. The closures came as a huge surprise to everyone, including Visalia Mayor Steve Nelsen and Visalia Airport Manager Mario Cifuentez.

"There's a lot of questions that need to be answered," Nelsen said.

The last flights took place on Friday afternoon, and one was diverted from Sacramento, taking Visalia-bound passengers to Burbank instead. The flight left at 12:31pm Friday, scheduled to fly to Visalia, then diverted to Burbank, landing there at 2:29pm, according to FlightAware.

"The important thing," Cifuentez said, "is what do we do now?"

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The USS Zumwalt underway for the first time conducting at-sea tests and trials in the Atlantic Ocean Dec. 7, 2015. Courtesy/US Navy/General Dynamics Bath Iron Works

Navy Destroyer Honoring Tulare Native Zumwalt Launched

Dave Adalian

When the first of the US Navy's new stealth destroyers put out to sea for its shakedown cruise last month, it was ironically fitting the warship bore the name of Tulare native son Elmo "Bud" Zumwalt Jr.

Zumwalt and the class of guided missile destroyers named in his honor have much in common--each mark sea changes in Naval operations, and both cast far shorter shadows than they should.

Intended to be the backbone of a modernized Navy, the Department of Defense originally intended to build 72 Zumwalt-class boats. That number was reduced repeatedly by Congress, and now only three of the ships will see service. The USS Zumwalt (DDG-1000), the first to be completed, took to the water last month from the Bath Iron Works in Maine under the command of Captain James A. Kirk, a name that caught the attention of the media and *Star Trek* fans.

Stealth-Class Destroyer

Although the USS Zumwalt is 600-feet long and more than 80-feet wide, displacing more than 14,500 tons and cruising at speeds up to 33.5 knots, its radar signature is similar to that of a small fishing boat. On board are advanced weapons systems, including helicopter drones and advanced missile systems. The USS Lyndon B. Johnson, the third and final Zumwalt class destroyer, will be fitted with laser cannon and rail guns.

"I think it's going to be a transitional vessel," retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy James Herdt told the

ZUMWALT continued on **10 »**

Curators of the Hanford Carnegie Museum Promote Reviving Visitor's Center

Catherine Doe

At the January 5 Hanford City Council study session, Hanford Carnegie MuseumCurator Patricia Dickerson and Museum Director Rob Van Wagoner made a proposal for the museum to restart the Hanford's Visitor Center.

Van Wagoner said,"The enhanced visitor program would require $80,000 of funding this year to cover startup costs for the center." Van Wagoner said the museum would seek to make the visitor program self-sufficient within about two years.

The Hanford Carnegie Museum and Visitor's Center would be open to museum and city visitors Monday thru Saturday, 10am to 5pm. Their basic goal is to make information available to tourists about shopping centers, motels, events and attractions in English and Spanish, but with much more creativity and outreach than the previous center or what is available now.

The museum proposes to brand the city with the slogan "A step back in time," Dickerson said.

She feels that the museum is just the thing to bolster tourism and serve visitors in Hanford.

According to Dickerson's presentation to the council, the museum is recognized as a leading resource for preserving the history of Hanford and Kings County. The museum, along with the Courthouse, Civic Auditorium and Bastille are easily recognized Hanford landmarks.

Dickerson said that Superior Dairy, Freddie the Fire Truck and the carousel set Hanfordapart from other communities. Their historic downtown business district and Civic Park conveys "A Step Back in Time." Dickerson feels the historical themes will be even more of a draw for people to visit Hanford.

The museum is already the unofficial information center and is an ideal location for the new Visitors Center, Dickerson said. It is not uncommon for museum staff to provide information not only on the museum but to also give directions, answer question on where to eat, shop, be entertained and stay. They are often asked about taxi service, bus and limousine service, the Amtrak schedule, or RV parks.

One of Dickerson and Van Wagoner's goals is to get a trolley similar to Visalia's and link the future Costco Center with downtown and to Walmart. They would also like the trolley to provide after-hours transit to hotel guests and give special tours. Another goal is to set up a visitor's booth at the Amtrak station.

HANFORD continued on **10 »**

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EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

The Ridiculousness of It All

"You're a lousy American," I told our daughter. "What kind of citizen are you, anyway?"

She had been assigned, as homework, a questionnaire which required her to view the State of the Union Address. Not much fun, she thought.

So I told her everyone, every year, loved the speech and looked forward to it almost as a participatory event. If you like something the president says, I told her, you stand up and applaud. If you disagree with the president, I said, you simply remain seated.

"It's sort of an at-home political Rocky Horror Picture Show," I explained.

The first time the president said something applause-worthy, I stood up and, with all the Democrats on screen, clapped.

She sat in some disbelief on the floor.

"The idea," I said, "is that we all do this at home, whichever party you belong to."

When the Democrats next stood, I stood with them.

The kid didn't move a muscle--except to casually cock an eyebrow in my direction.

"You're a lousy American," I told her.

She came back with, "You're a birther."

I was floored by this.

"Dude," she said, glancing over her glasses, "you know I wasn't even born here. I was born in Mexico."

I pretended, briefly, to reflect, saying, "The least you can do is stand on one leg."

"Duh," she scoffed.

"What kind of citizen are you, anyway?"

"Dude," she said. "Really. 'The least you can do is stand on one leg?' I mean, OF COURSE if you didn't at least stand on one leg then you wouldn't be standing at all. You'd just be sitting there. Like me."

"Obstructionist," I said. "I can see you'd make a perfect Republican."

Again, she arched an eyebrow at me. "Dude, you don't have a leg to stand on."

"But I am standing. I'm participating."

"I wish I could vote."

"Who would you vote for?"

"Bernie Sanders."

"Not Hillary?"

"No way. Bernie's the only one for free college."

"Shouldn't that make him my guy?"

Even though she now has a job, employed for the first time, she thought about my role as the family ATM. I am, notoriously, a soft touch.

"I'm voting your pocketbook," she said.

"You mean your algebra grade is."

"Duuude--"

"It's Dad," I interrupted her. "Not Dude. And that grade has to come up before you can even think about college. You can do it...Dudette."

There were a few moments of silence while, still cross-legged on the floor, she contemplated passing algebra.

"Who's that guy behind Obama?" she asked.

"Joe Biden?"

"No--the guy on the right."

"That's Yon Yonson. He comes from Wisconsin."

"Not that again!"

"He's Paul Ryan," I said. "He's the Speaker of the House."

"What happened to the orange guy?"

"John Boehner?"

"I guess..."

"He quit."

"Why?"

"Because he couldn't do the job."

"I guess that makes sense."

"What kind of Republican are you, anyway?"

"I'm not any kind of Republican."

"Then how does Boehner's quitting make any sense?"

"It's exactly how I feel about algebra."

— Joseph Oldenbourg

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Political Fix

Catherine Doe

What Does It Take to Elect a Mexican Around Here?

Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux said during a recent SPOT meeting that Tulare County is 63% Hispanic and that the sheriff's department is 43% Hispanic. The sheriff's goal is to reflect the community, so he was pretty content with the department's progress.

Compared to where Tulare County is in terms of elected officials, Sheriff Boudreaux is an absolute visionary. The voters' commitment to having their elected officials reflect the community is 1%.The only elected Hispanic official in Tulare County right now is Virginia Gurrola, a Porterville City Council member.

Tulare County voters have elected a grand total of two Hispanics in recent history to county wide offices and the three largest cities, Jesus Gamboa for Visalia City Council and Ms. Gurrola. Lali Moheno was appointed by Arnold Schwarzenegger to the Tulare County Board of Supervisors and then lost to Supervisor Phil Cox when faced with an election.

With Hispanics comprising two thirds of the population, all we can show for it is two elected officials over the last 30 years?

In the 2014 election, the race for Assembly District 26 gave Tulare County a wide range of diversity that was quite refreshing. In the race there were two Hispanics, two African Americans, one Filipina and one White guy,and it looked like Rudy Mendoza was going to win. Three guesses on who won? Yep,the White guy, Devon Mathis.

Then the excuses started rolling in: Voters didn't realize there were two Republicans running and checked off the guy at the top of the ballot.Voters got Devon confused with Devin (Nunes) and voted for him. The moon was in the seventh house, and Jupiter aligned with Mars.

Let's just be honest. Mr. Mendoza lost because his last name is Mendoza.

That leads us to the 2016 election. Ruben Macareno, chair of the Democratic Central Committee for Tulare County, is a glutton for punishment and is throwing his hat into the ring again. He pulled papers the first week of January to again run for Assembly District 26, challenging now incumbent Mr. Mathis.

We put on the *Valley Voice* Facebook page his press release, which read, "This is an exploratory effort until my final set of signatures and fees are paid at which time I would be a declared candidate." He says he would be the ideal candidate because of his familiarity with the issues, the incumbent, and the districthe acquired during his 2014 attempt for the same seat. He points out what is most important is his ability to network and work with the legislative members of the majority party."

Mr. Macareno goes on to point out that "he has a long history of political activity, has ran in, and volunteered in, several campaigns ranging from local to national elections. He was a student leader in Farmersville and Exeter, and when he attended college in southern California. He was the vice-chair of the state party's Chicano Latino Caucus. In 2012, he attended the Democratic National Convention as a district delegate….He formally worked as a newsroom administrator and public relations coordinator at the Los Angeles Times; the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials in Washington DC; Proteus Training and Employment in Visalia; and the *Visalia Times-Delta* and Mineral King Publishing Company as a sports writer."

So what did all this experience get him? In 2014, I naively predicted that Mr.Macareno would easily come in second and go on to the general November election. Mr.Macareno ended up coming in a distant fourth in the June primary, temporarily ending his chances of holding a state office.

Is it possible that Mr. Macareno and other Hispanics could do a little better in 2016?

There are quite a few Hispanics running for office in 2016, and more will probably be filing papers. Besides Mr. Macareno, Loius Campos, former president of the Visalia Democratic Club, and Alberto Zuniga Santiago, a Tea Partier, have pulled papers to challenge Congressman Devin Nunes. Vincent Salinas, former Visalia City Planner and Angel Galvez, county worker, are running for Tulare County Supervisor District One. There are other Hispanic candidates but they are too young or unknown to make an impact.

The two that have the best chance of winning office are Mr. Salinas and Mr. Macareno. But both have also have experienced pretty bad electoral losses in the past.

So what to do? It just so happens that I have the answer.

First they both need to start praying that Donald Trump wins the Republican Presidential Nomination. With Mr. Trump at the top of the ticket, normally lazy Democrats will be coming out of the woodwork to go to the ballot box.

This will help all down-ballot Democrats and/or Hispanics. While praying, Mr. Macareno and Mr. Salinas need to start a serious voter registration drive--not just talk about it, like they do at all Hispanic rallies. While praying and registering voters, they should probably tell a couple of jokes such as:

"What is Donald Trump telling Barack Obama supporters? Orange Is the New Black" and "Donald Trump is giving narcissism a bad name." They should encourage the Hispanics they meet to share their own jokes about Donald Trump, because all of them have received a few on Facebook or texts after Mr. Trump's announcement speech that he was running for president.

Most importantly, while out campaigning and registering voters, they need remind Hispanics that, if they do not vote, President Trump might deport their abuelita. I realize that Vincent Salinas is a Republican, but Mr. Trump will deport the relatives of Republicans also.

So what is it going to take to get an Hispanic elected in Tulare County? Some prayer, laughter and a lot of hard work.

Who Knew?

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump and Democratic-Socialist Bernie Sanders have an amazing amount in common, even an overlapping constituency. Listening to their debate performances this may not seem plausible, but it's true.

Let us start with the obvious. They both have crazy hair. Mr. Sanders looks like one of the sarcastic judges on Sesame Street who throws out one-liners throughout their movies, and Trump looks like his closest relative is an orangutan.

Let us state the second obvious. They are both old angry, white men. That's how they have a partial overlap in one of their constituencies, which is–uneducated, middle-aged white men. What a shocker.

The constituency overlap comes from the fact that both Mr. Trump and Mr. Sanders connect to this group. The types of good paying jobs for blue collar men are disappearing and these two candidates put those fears into words and give them a platform. Also both men yell a lot about the current condition of the United States, and they yell about the loss of these jobs.

Next, neither was seen as having a chance when their respective campaigns began. Now they have become populist heroes within their own parties and draw the largest crowds of any of the candidates. When the news covers their events, it isn't so much to report on what they said, well maybe in Mr. Trump's case it is, but to gawk over how 10,000 people show up.

The commonality may also stem from the fact that it wasn't so long ago that Mr. Trump was a pro-choice Democrat. A pro-choice Democrat

POLITICAL FIX continued on **9 »**

Linda Hightower Herron

I had known Linda for over 40 years and cared for her deeply.
Just thought it would interesting to share experiences.
Leave your thoughts at:

www.chockiec.com/linda-hightower-herron

Rawhide Celebrates 70 Years in Visalia with Commemorative Logo

The Visalia Rawhide are celebrating the franchise's 70th Anniversary in 2016, and unveiled a commemorative logo to mark the occasion today.The logo will be featured on a patch on Rawhide uniforms this season, and will also be used on various promotional material.

With Recreation Ballpark's iconic right-field barn and the Sierra-Nevada Mountains (visible beyond left field), the mark celebrates two of the distinctive visual features that fans have grown to love about the club's historic home. The club has always played at the corner of Goshen and Giddings, and has enjoyed the eighth-longest tenure at the same ballpark of all current Minor League teams.

The barn, and the alternating lines in the field's green grass, also symbolize the area's rich agricultural heritage. The logo is highlighted in Rawhide Red, representing the club's present and future.

"We're so proud of this club's tradition, and we're excited about its future," Rawhide general manager Jennifer Pendergraft said. "This logo encapsulates the best of our franchise's heritage, and the anticipation of what's to come."

The Rawhide begin their 70th Anniversary season on April 7, with the home opener on Thursday, April 14 against Bakersfield.

Lindsay

Continued from p. 1

Mecum also voiced opposition to holding a special meeting to set goals, saying he preferred to hold such a session during a regularly scheduled meeting. He opposed paying the facilitator's $1,000 fee, as well. The city attorney, however, pointed out that while he would not have to attend the study session, he would have to attend a council meeting held for the same purpose, eliminating any saving.

Absentee Councilman

Mecum, who also objected to the length of the meeting, missed eight regularly scheduled council meetings in 2015. He also failed to attend all of the council's special meetings, including sessions on ethics and budget planning, and though he was appointed the city's representative to the Tulare County Economic Development Committee, he attended none of their meetings last year.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rosaena Sanchez also said she might not be able to attend Tuesday's study session because of her work schedule. The study session was in the works as early as November, and Zigler said he received only one response to an email asking about attendance.

Overcoming Dysfunction

Despite objections, Zigler again pressed his call for consensus and cooperation on the council. A singular voice is needed, he said, to make it possible for city staff to function well.

"The hope would be that we come up with something that represents all of you, that you can all get behind, and say, 'Staff, this is the direction we want to go in,' we salute you, and we go out and do it, because we don't always get the same message," he said. "You all have goals, but they're not all the same goals, and there needs to be unity in that sense."

Voicing his support for holding the study session, Councilman Danny Salinas said he hoped for a return to functionality.

"I was part of a council when we were doing things for the city," he said. "I want to get back to that to that point, because we're the voice of the city and when we have the same objectives, you saw what got done. Our projects need to get done."

He also gave his firm opinion on attendance.

"We took this oath as part of being a council member, and being a part of a council is having to be at these meetings," Salinas said. "I feel that if we make any decisions that day (at the study session), the council has to abide by them."

Group Therapy

While the council eventually agreed to hold the study session, the vote to do so was not without a last bit of contentiousness. As the council members took turns explaining their votes, Mecum continued to interrupt to repeat his objections.

"This kind of work, to be done right, it takes time," Councilwoman Pam Kimball said, explaining her support. "I think it takes some privacy, being able for everybody to express themselves."

This brought yet another response from Mecum, who questioned the qualifications of the facilitator, a Visalia-based therapist and consultant.

"What is this man?" Mecum asked. "Is he a mental health professional, or what is he?"

"He's a psychologist, so, yeah, I guess so," Zigler answered.

"If someone needs a psychologist," Mecum said, "they can go on his own."

Mecum then stopped the discussion to ask what he was voting on before dissenting. Sanchez also voted not to hold the study session.

Wolves at the Door

In the meantime, the city's general fund is still deeply in the red, and its former finance director, Tamera Larkin, has retired, but not before giving a final midyear budget report. As of January 1, the city had taken $1,543,126 into its general fund; however, its expenses have topped that at $2,054,968.

Taking into account outstanding revenue, the city was already underwater by $491,792.

A plan to ask voters to increase the city's sales tax to gap the budget shortfall was killed in December when Mecum and Sanchez refused to support it. No other plan to increase the city's revenue has yet been put forth.

With money tight, the city is cutting corners everywhere it can. It recently decided to repair several of the city's alleyways, but the work will be done in parts, with each project budgeted under $25,000 to avoid paying laborers higher prevailing wages. It's also hoping to redirect state funds earmarked for planning the decontamination of one of the city's wells.

"That's our DBCP problem well," Zigler said. The state has set a safety limit of 0.2 parts per million for the chemical. "We're right now running 0.22, and we've been trending downward."

The hope is the well will fall below the dangerous level on its own. The city is negotiating with the state to allow it to use the money for other water-related projects, such as drilling a test well to expand the city's drought-shortened water supply.

Glimmers of Hope

There was a bit of bright financial news. The city's annual outside audit was completed in just four days, as opposed to several weeks as in the past, and no major issues were found. A jovial Zigler called the result "a really, really big, important deal."

Zigler may also have cobbled together a replacement for Larkin.

A former city finance director has applied for a part-time position with the city, and another candidate with qualifications in other fields is seeking the full-time finance position.

Zigler hopes to hire both, relying on the retiree to mentor the newcomer.

"I feel good about it," he said. "Quality people. It will help us hit the ground running in 2016."

SeaPort

Continued from p. 1

Moving On

While trying to obtain more information from SeaPort management and the Federal Aviation Administration, Visalia is considering its possibilities for the future, starting with an upcoming Airport Advisory Committee meeting.

"I think, for us, we have to consider who's left," Cifuentez said.

Those left may include the companies that placed Essential Air Service (EAS) bids for service when SeaPort did in 2014, and whoever else may be interested.

"There are relatively few on the West Coast," he said.

"I'd like to see a track record of making it through a whole contract," he added, while providing good service.

Good service, the manager, mayor and Vice Mayor E. Warren Gubler agree, was something that Visalia's prior carrier, Great Lakes Airlines, did not provide.

"In dealing with Great Lakes, we were very unhappy with their service," Gubler said. "SeaPort had been wonderful; they increased their ridership."

Indeed, the airline often filled its 9-seater, single-turboprop engine Cessna Caravan planes to Burbank and Sacramento up to four times a day on weekdays and twice daily on weekends.

Gubler, who serves on the Airport Advisory Committee, said he would like to see the city keep its passenger air service.

"I think we're going put it out to bid again," he said.

The air services now rely on federal subsidies through the EAS program, but Gubler said that through SeaPort, service in Visalia was working toward being self-sufficient.

"If we can find a good company that has reliable service, we could [be self-sufficient]" he said.

Passengers vs Freight

Another option for the airport is to terminate passenger service and consider enticing businesses to use it as a purely corporate travel-based airport and/or attracting a cargo carrier.

At the time SeaPort was awarded a two-year contract, in September 2014, the city was offered a buyout program to do away with its subsidized service, Nelsen said.

"It was a substantial amount of money," he said, adding that the buyout would be paid over a three-year period.

In a 3-2 vote, Nelsen voted against awarding SeaPort service in 2014, as did Council Member Greg Collins. At the time, Nelsen said he felt that any passenger airlines bidding on service would only provide a poor job of service or have low ridership.

"This [SeaPort's sudden shutdown] just adds creditability and credence to what I was saying," Nelsen said.

"I, personally, would like to see it go out to bid and give it another shot," Gubler said, "not with Great Lakes, though.

"The federal government offered $2 million [to convert the airport]," he said, "but once that's done, it would never come back."

There are some airlines that offered bids that would probably bid again, as well as new players that may come in with a bid this time.

Potential Passenger Carriers

Boutique Air, based in San Francisco, bid in 2014, and recently was awarded EAS in Merced flying to Oakland, Los Angeles and Las Vegas, Nevada. Cifuentez expressed concerns with the airline in that it has recently picked up numerous contracts, and he questions if they will keep those routes up, he said.

Mokulele Airlines, owned by Arizona-based Transpac Aviation Inc., services the Hawaiian Islands. It is one that Gubler would like to re-consider.

"It wants to get a toe-hold in California," he said.

Another contender may be Anchorage-based PenAir, an Alaska Airlines codeshare partner, which recently entered the California market. This airline was recently awarded EAS service from Crescent City, California to Portland, Oregon, and has expressed interest in serving other California cities.

If air service is to remain alive in Tulare County, consideration will have to be given to who can provide the most economical service while having a good track record and providing reliable service.

SeaPort's failure to complete a two-year contract leaves a bitter taste for these considerations.

In a press release late Friday evening, SeaPort stated:

> *The company was forced to take this action because of the impact on SeaPort's business and operations following the effects of the shortage of airline pilots in the United States.*

Whether this revealed the whole truth behind the immediate action remains unclear.

"I'm amazed by the way it happened," Nelsen said. "In business – there is always a 30- or 60-day notice.

"How could they leave those passengers stranded?" he wondered, referring to those on Flight 5301, which landed in Burbank rather than Visalia.

"They could have at least completed their contract with them," he said.

With flyers, SeaPort has had a poor reputation with regard to flight times and cancellations, according to feedback left on Yelp, Facebook and Twitter.

Speculation alludes to the company trying to grow too fast. Just prior to the shutdown of the California and Kansas services, SeaPort was sharing its intention of adding three new routes on its website.

Along with the California and Kansas routes being taken off the site over the weekend, the company also removed references to routes it had advertised out of Seattle to Port Angeles, Washington and Moses Lake, Washington.

SeaPort Reasoning

There are many who doubt the shortage of pilots as the real reason for the cancellations of service.

The following was reported in an article posted to *Aviation Pros,* and provided by McClatchy,

> *SeaPort Executive Vice President Tim Seiber reiterated the reason stated in the news release for the sudden closure – a shortage of airline pilots in the United States.*
>
> *As of Saturday night, the airline had 17 pilots available when 54 are needed to keep up with the schedule.*
>
> *'We've had airplanes sitting on the ground, and we keep having the attrition of pilots, attributable to the increase in the required number of hours that pilot have to have in order to fly large jets," Seiber said.*
>
> *To work as a co-pilot for a large airline, a pilot must have a minimum of 1,500 hours of flight time and an air transport pilot rating, "like a master's degree to fly in the co-pilot's seat," Seiber said. The FAA changed that rule in 2014, he said.*
>
> *While it's true that a pilot only needs 1,200 hours to captain one of SeaPort's nine-seat aircraft, and may be co-pilot with 500-700 hours of flight experience, pilots are plucked up by the big airlines when the 1,500-hour plateau is reached.*
>
> *"They're getting lured out the door by $10,000 and $15,000 signing bonuses by the major airlines," Seiber said.*
>
> *The rule change did not affect SeaPort until recently, he said, and with rented aircraft sitting idle, costing money and not generating income, "we had to make a decision. (Friday) was one of the most painful days in my 35 years. If Congress doesn't do something, this problem is going to persist."*

With speculation on several aircraft and pilot forums online, the subject of possible repossession of planes has come up.

On January 16, forum user "Tpinks" posted to *Airline Pilot Central*:

> *"On Airliners.net, someone mentioned that they may have had half of the fleet repo'ed this past week."*

User "Sanguy" replied to the post, less than an hour later:

> *"Very true. Half the fleet went back."*

User "N19906" posted:

> *"They lease everything.*
>
> *One of the leaseholders had ten-ish of their airplanes. There was a thirty day clause before they could repossess them in case of a "disagreement". Well, the powers that be never let on to that fact when the clock started ticking, so it was a big surprise for the employees. All of the CA operations ceased about ten hours after the airplanes were repossessed.*
>
> *They're down to two in PDX, w/ one other stuck in SAN awaiting repair, and three-ish in Memphis.*
>
> *They hope to recover, but past preformance of mgnt. is a bit "sketchy".*
>
> *Fat on FO [First Officers]'s, short on CA [Captain]'s. Turnover is high.*
>
> *Good luck guys."*

A tracking of many plane tail numbers showed that some planes utilized by SeaPort were owned by Avion Capital Corporation in Anchorage. Phone calls to this corporation were not returned by press time.

Whether the closure is related to the pilot shortage, financial problems, or a combination of both, Visalia is moving forward. It is important to note that the SeaPort closing has cost some Visalians their jobs as well.

On the Valley Voice website, Jamie Russell posted:

> *As an employee of seaport in Visalia, this whole thing came as a total shock. We were in business 1 day the next gone. I don't understand why they'd do this with so many people depending on it as well as our passengers. While I'll admit we had recently hit a rough patch with delays and cancellations, it was most likely not the cause of this and I whole heartedly extend my sincere apologies to ALL our passengers. I can only hope someone else comes in and we can have our jobs back and be ready to serve our passengers with the upmost service. I only ask that if this happens and I see our passengers again that you will be loyal to us as you were seaport. GOD BLESS EVERYONE!!*

Agriculture

Wet Weather Doesn't Hinder Citrus Harvest

Kate Campbell, CFBF

Citrus harvest is progressing between storms, the state's growers and shippers say, a challenge not seen during the past four years of drought. But weather is only one factor, producers of the state's signature fruit say.

They also face water supply and infrastructure problems, pest infestations, regulatory constraints and uncertain market conditions.

"Overall, we're about 25 percent picked, so we're through the front end of harvest season," said Kevin Severns, a Sanger citrus grower and general manager of Orange Cove-Sanger Citrus Association. He said he expects citrus harvest will continue into May.

"We got through the December cold spell pretty well, but there may be some damage to tangelo and mandarin varieties," Severns said. "The bulk of the navel crop came through unscathed."

If harvest delays stack up, the growers and shippers may get stuck with overripe fruit late in the season, he said, "but now quality is excellent. This is the third year the eating quality of California navels has been exceptional."

"So far, so good," Severns said. "There are still a lot of challenges that could happen between now and the end of harvest, but we're bullish on this crop."

Fresno County citrus farmer Greg Meyers said temperatures during the December cold spell weren't much below 28 degrees where damage to the fruit starts to occur.

"When it did dip, our wind machines helped us out," he said. "We were fine in our location."

This season's navel orange crop is forecast to be slightly smaller than last year, an estimated 81 million cartons, produced on fewer acres and yielding somewhat smaller fruit, the U.S. Department of Agriculture crop survey predicts. The forecast includes conventional, organic and specialty navel oranges, including cara cara and blood orange varieties.

California's grapefruit production is down 1 percent from the 2013-14 season, but lemon production is up 9 percent, USDA crop analysts found. Tangerine and mandarin production in California is up 24 percent from last season with continued increase in planted acres.

"We're about to start harvesting tangelos and sweet mandarins," Meyers said. "And we're starting to prune our citron trees to get ready for next season. We're the only citron grower in the U.S. and there's a lot of demand for the fruit."

As to rain, he said the weather outlook is "very encouraging, but it won't be enough to recover from four years of drought. It will, however, go a long way toward providing growers with what they need to get through the coming crop year."

Most packinghouses have planned for a wetter winter and as opportunities occur between storms, growers are moving enough fruit into processing plants to carry packing and shipping activities for a week or more at a time, said Bob Blakely, vice president of Exeter-based California Citrus Mutual.

"If we don't get a break in the weather and can't get back into the field to pick, then we could see some impact on supplies," he told agricultural reporters.

If prolonged rains occur during coming weeks, that could cause problems with rind quality, "but we're a long way from that becoming a problem," Blakely said.

Another challenge, he said, is the threat posed by the Asian citrus psyllid, a non-native pest that can spread huanglongbing, a disease deadly to citrus plants. The California Department of Food and Agriculture said Dec. 28 that southern Stanislaus County has been placed under quarantine for ACP following detection of two psyllids within the city of Turlock.

ACP county-wide quarantines are in place in Imperial, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura counties, with portions of Alameda, Fresno, Kern, Madera, Merced, San Benito, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Stanislaus counties also under quarantine.

Workers sort navel and cara cara oranges for shipment at the Visalia Citrus Packing Group packinghouse in Woodlake. The operation picks ahead of storms to maintain adequate supplies for market. Cecilia Parsons/CFBF

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced last week the first of four preliminary risk assessments for insecticides potentially harmful to bees,

CITRUS continued on **7 »**

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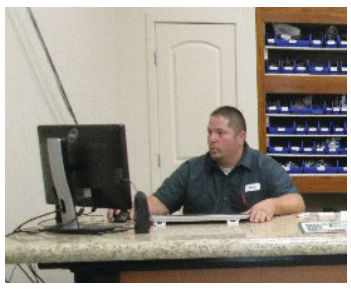

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Agriculture

Commentary: Agricultural Education Programs Need Stable Funding

Fred Van Vleck, CFBF

In recent years, and even more in recent months, the way school Career and Technical Education is funded in the state of California has changed dramatically. Probably the best-known CTE program to the farming and ranching community is the Agriculture Education/FFA program, so I will focus primarily around this vibrant, effective program and the Regional Occupational Centers and Programs, or ROCP, funding it once received from the state.

In 2012-13, the last year of ROCP funding, the state provided just under $385 million to support CTE. The program was primarily aimed at advanced-level courses for students over the age of 16 through their senior year. Many strong programs that were developed and sustained with these funds, dating back 40-plus years, were left without a clear future at the end of the 2012-13 school year, when the funding abruptly stopped.

Until now, there has been no answer from Sacramento on how school districts are supposed to fund and maintain a strong CTE program. This caused many school districts to cut and/or eliminate their CTE programs. This is not the answer in the nation's No. 1 agriculture-producing state! We need a skilled workforce at all levels.

Just released in November, and open for application this month, is the state's answer for funding CTE. It created a grant providing the more than 1,000 school districts across the state $400 million this year, $300 million in year 2 and $200 million in year 3. Local districts will be required to maintain a match of $400 million all three years, plus an additional three years.

The problem is that the state amount will be diminishing during the first three years and nonexistent in the last three years. This makes it impossible for districts to fund a sustainable program.

An additional problem with this funding model is the funding is targeted toward new programs instead of focusing on existing, successful programs. In your local high schools, think about successful Agriculture Education and FFA programs. Imagine ROCP funding being eliminated and replaced with just a fraction of the funding, thereby allowing other districts to build new CTE programs that may not be related to agriculture at all: This is the problem we are facing.

I am a product of a successful Agriculture Education program. Both the soft and hard skills the program taught played a vital role in my being a productive California citizen. The FFA program is what created my desire to attend Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and graduate to become an agriculture teacher and now a school district superintendent. I will not be so bold as to say these programs will have the same impact on all other students, but I will say high-quality CTE programs positively impact students who are college bound as well as those who seek a career without a degree.

While I do not want to discount the impact on the student bound for a four-year college, I would like to focus on students who for whatever reason can't or don't want to go to college. In my community on the North Coast, until recently, this was not an issue. There were viable alternatives: the timber or fishing industries. This is no longer an option, as these industries have diminished to a fraction or their former prominence. This is not an uncommon phenomenon across our state. Many entry-level jobs that once were an alternative for our next generation no longer exist.

We need to create a logical training program for students who are not college bound, that will keep them in school and set them up for a career or advanced training out of high school. For years, the Agriculture Education programs have done this, and the new funding system from the state for CTE programs jeopardizes this future.

To solve this complex issue, a secure, sustainable funding source needs to be developed and dedicated to CTE. We need to have a long-term plan for what our future entry-level positions look like and build proper training programs to support the future need. For years, FFA and Agriculture Education have filled this need—and with proper support and funding, they will for years to come.

As with other CTE programs, Agriculture Education needs to evolve with our changing times, but without the proper financial and community support the programs will fall short of this goal.

Our next generation—our children—need you to contact your state senators and Assembly members to tell the story about the impact CTE has had on you and your workforce. Help them understand not all careers require a four-year degree, but rather a highly skilled workforce whose members understand your industry.

We need students to leave high school with the skills and desire for advanced training in a multitude of hands-on programs. This desire and skill starts in the comprehensive, well-thought-out high school CTE programs.

(Fred Van Vleck, Ed.D., is superintendent of Eureka City Schools in Eureka and a former Agriculture Education teacher. He may be contacted at vanvleckf@eurekacityschools.org.)

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Analysts Urge Farmers to Watch Flood Plan Update

Kate Campbell, CFBF

In California, where history shows drought is almost inevitably followed by flood, government agencies, engineers and property owners are now working on an update to the State Flood Plan.

That's important, analysts say, because the Central Valley has been identified as one of the nation's most vulnerable areas for flood damage and because state agencies have announced that improvements costing $14 billion to $17 billion need to be made during the next 20 to 25 years to address the problem. But land use experts also say future improvements could affect tens of thousands of acres, much of it farmland.

"Because of the very real threat of flooding in the Central Valley and the scope of system changes being proposed, it's in the best interest of farmers and ranchers to become familiar with proposals and participate in the process of developing a final update," California Farm Bureau Federation environmental policy analyst Justin Fredrickson said.

The Central Valley Flood Protection Plan guides state, federal and local agencies for managing flood risk along the Sacramento and San Joaquin river systems. An integrated flood protection plan was adopted in 2012, with a five-year update required in 2017.

"The (CVFP) board expects the 2017 updated plan to be delivered by the end of this year, and then it will have six months to adopt a final version," said Leslie Gallagher, the board's executive officer. "During 2016, there will absolutely be opportunity for public input."

She cited monthly public meetings that serve as an open forum for information about what she called "all things flood related," and encouraged participation from farmers and agricultural organizations, environmental interests, government agencies and technical consultants. Online information about upcoming meetings and events is at www.cvfpb.ca.gov.

New to the plan will be the addition of a comprehensive environmental conservation strategy. The Central Valley Flood Protection Act of 2008 required the state Department of Water Resources to develop a "sustainable, integrated" plan to improve the management of flood risks and conservation of river and floodplain ecosystems in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys.

Development of the strategy has included input from environmental groups, natural resources agencies and representatives from CFBF and county Farm Bureaus in the Central Valley. The 2017 strategy update is online at www.water.ca.gov/conservationstrategy/cs_new.cfm.

The state's current flood management infrastructure has evolved since the 1800s to include nearly 150 reservoirs, pumping plants, bypasses, sediment basins, channels, weirs and 1,600 miles of levees.

The general manager of Dixon-based Reclamation District 2068, Mike Hardesty, has been part of a related regional planning effort among agencies in Sacramento, Solano and Yolo counties. Local flood planners are looking at different ways to manage infrastructure and land within the lower Yolo Bypass to produce multiple benefits, in addition to flood protection.

"Up until now, the state's flood system has been devoted to the single purpose of flood control, but the discussion today is about adding a variety of new purposes in the floodways," said Hardesty, who is president of the California Central Valley Flood Control Association.

"Adding other priorities to the system, like habitat and recreation, in addition to flood control, may have profound effects on valley agriculture," he said. "I represent an agricultural region, and we look to the state to help ensure the effects of changes to landscape management don't have a negative effect on agriculture in the region."

Hardesty said there's "great concern" that adding new purposes, such as endangered-species protection, would burden people who have been living and farming in the area for more than a century.

"Some people in our region are skeptical that changes to the flood management system will do much good for them or the system in the long run," he said.

After reviewing the conservation strategy, Fredrickson said the draft update currently calls for creation of an additional 20,000 acres of permanent habitat in the Sacramento River watershed, plus 9,000 acres of permanent habitat in the San Joaquin River region.

"These are amounts of new habitat a state Department of Water Resources document indicates are needed for conservation of species in connection with the flood infrastructure projects, though

FLOOD continued on **9 »**

Citrus

Continued from p. 6

specifically neonicotinoids. In the assessment, the EPA said citrus "may" have residues of pesticides in pollen and nectar above a threshold level.

California Citrus Mutual President Joel Nelsen called the agency's premise that neonicotinoids are a major contributor to the decline in bee populations or colony collapse false, noting the National Academy of Sciences finds there are several causes.

"Citrus does not require bees to produce a crop," said Nelson. "But the citrus industry is in danger of being wiped out by the incurable disease huanglongbing that is spread by the Asian citrus psyllid, which can only be controlled by timely pesticide applications.

"We empathize with beekeepers dealing with colony collapse," Nelsen said. "But neonicotinoids are a vital tool in the battle to save the citrus industry."

He said CCM encourages EPA to continue regulating pesticides and other crop production tools based on sound, replicated science and "not to be swayed by unsubstantiated and emotional hyperbole."

In the meantime, Severns, who is chairman of the CCM board of directors, said the U.S. market for California citrus is good for larger and medium fruit, "but smaller sizes are always a market challenge this time of year, with prices slipping considerably.

"We realize that seasons like this are a marathon and not a horse race," he said.

(Kate Campbell is an assistant editor of Ag Alert. She may be contacted at kcampbell@cfbf.com.)

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CEO of Grace Homes Responds to Complaint of Sexual Harassment

Catherine Doe

Sherrie Kuns-Fehlman, a former employee of Grace Homes, filed a complaint with the Department of Fair Employment and Housing in December, 2015. The complaint accused the CEO of Grace Homes, Phil Luna, of sexual harassment, physical assault and creating a hostile work environment.

On January 13 Phil Luna, along with his lawyer, Linda Jenner, sat down with the *Valley Voice* to present evidence and documents to demonstrate that no sexual harassment occurred.

A January 11 statement issued by the Board of Directors of Grace Homes states, "that a lengthy and thorough investigation of the allegations were made according to employment policy and procedures and that the findings of the investigative committee were, "'the Committee finds there was no sexual harassment by Phil Luna against Fehlman' resulting in a unanimous decision of complete exoneration of the allegations against Mr. Luna.'"

Luna said that it would have been physically impossible for him to have assaulted Fehlman because they were never in the same place at the same time. He stated that, in fact, he was only in the same room with Fehlman on one occasion and it was in the company of her parents and an employee. According to Luna, a few days after he was hired in February, 2015, Gale and Glenda Kuns called him over for a meeting at their home located across from the Grace Homes office. While in their front room, Fehlman walked in and was introduced to Luna. Luna claims, beside one phone call from Fehlman, that was the first and last time they ever interacted.

Luna said that the last couple of weeks have been a hardship on his family and that the complaint will make future employment difficult because, "you can't un-ring that bell."

"I had to call my wife and speak to my kids that they may hear talk because of Fehlman's accusations," said Luna.

He and Jenner are considering filing a countersuit for defamation of character and malicious prosecution if Fehlman proceeds with her case.

Grace Homes was started in the 1980's by husband and wife team, Gale and Glenda Kuns. They bought their first group home in the early 1980's for $800 to help young mothers and their babies. The Kuns started out with six pregnant girls, but at the ministry's height they had 11 homes with 85 beds, a foster center, and a boys' home. Grace Ministries was the only place in the state that was licensed and had the personnel qualified to deal with the emotional needs of sex-trafficked pregnant girls and other victims of sexual abuse. Grace Homes could accept such high risk girls because Fehlman was a licensed forensic counselor among her many other social work capabilities.

Sherrie Kuns-Fehlman is the daughter of Gale and Glenda Kuns. Three generations of the family have worked at the ministry. Gale Kuns was the CEO of Grace Homes until he and his wife had to step down after settling with the State of California Department of Social Services in 2012 because of mismanagement.

The Investigation Begins

Fehlman claims the incidents took place in January and April of 2015. But Grace Homes' lawyer, Steve Cameron, did not become aware of the accusations until July 10, during an email exchange with Fehlman. It was at that time, she told him she did not feel safe in Luna's presence and explained why. As a result, Grace Homes board of directors appointed an investigative committee during their July 20 directors' meeting to investigate Fehlman's accusations.

The investigative committee was comprised of Grace Homes' lawyer, Cameron, and two board members. They started their investigation in July and finished in December of 2015. The investigation included questionnaires sent out to 17 witnesses comprised of current and former employees. Ten of the 17 witnesses responded, including all of the current employees and one former employee, a former CEO. The investigation also includes a statement from Fehlman and a response from Luna.

According to Grace Homes employment policy and procedures, the "Complainant and Respondent will be interviewed first. A court reporter will be present to ensure accuracy. Any witnesses identified by either party will be interviewed. The board will also interview anyone that it believes may have knowledge on this issue." Later the policy states that "At least one committee member will attend every interview."

The Investigation's Findings

Three major issues were used as the basis for finding that Luna was innocent of all charges. First, the committee investigation concluded that Luna and Fehlman were not at work together on the dates of the alleged harassment. Fehlman said that Luna touched her inappropriately and made inappropriate comments in January of 2015, but Luna did not start work at Grace Homes until February 25. Fehlman also claimed that the second and third incidents happened on April 23 and April 24, but none of the 10 witnesses who responded to the questionnaire said that she was present on the campus.

The Grace Homes Sexual Harassment report states, "The Committee finds that Luna …… was not present on the Grace Homes campus in January. Fehlman completely fabricated this event. The Committee further finds that Fehlman fabricated the events of April 23, 2015 for the reasons set forth above, the strongest being they were both present at the May 11 board meeting and no mention was made of any alleged harassment."

Second, the committee found Fehlmen's allegations of sexual harassment dubious because she did not report them. The committee found that the board of directors of Grace Homes did not learn of this allegation until July 10, 2015, nearly seven months after she claimed they happened.

Fehlman said, she did report the harassment to the CEO, Gale Kuns, on the evening of April 24, after the third incident. Because of health problems and being out of town, Kuns did not have an opportunity to address his daughter's concerns until mid-May, when he fired Luna. As a result, a special board meeting was called on June 9, where Kuns claims he discussed with the board that Luna had not fulfilled his duties as CFO, had a gambling problem, and had assaulted his daughter. But the board meeting minutes, do not record that Kuns discussed anything of the sort, thereby refuting Fehlmans claims that she reported the abuse.

For this reason, the investigative committee found that, "there is no corporate record of Gale Kuns reporting this to anyone."

Their third and most damning reason, according to the investigative committee, for finding Luna innocent revolves around the May 11 board of directors' meeting. The report states, "The Committee notes that both Fehlman and Luna were present at the May 11 2015 meeting. If Fehlman was uncomfortable in Luna's presence, then she would have said something at that meeting. Indeed, having been harassed by Luna and then being present at a board meeting, Fehlman should have reported the behavior then. She did not. The minutes indicate that Fehlman would be hired to provide training to staff. Since her hours at Grace Homes would be increased by this resolution and she was present, it is difficult to believe that Ms. Fehlman was fearful of being in Luna's presence yet did not mention anything."

Another accusation leveled at Luna was not part of the investigation, but was stated in the last article. The Kuns claimed he was sleeping on the job and having another woman in his office with the blinds drawn. Luna and Jenner wanted the interview with the *Valley Voice* to take place in his office so that I could see there was a glass door separating his office from his secretary's office. This glass door between the two offices had no blinds and the secretary could easily see inside.

"The idea of closing the blinds is ridiculous and not possible," Luna said.

Problems Surface with the Investigation

When discussing the investigative committee's findings with John Sarsfield, one of Fehlman's lawyers, he said, "Let me guess, the Grace Homes Board exonerated themselves?"

Methodological problems with the investigation start with the questionnaire distributed to the 17 witnesses. The questionnaire states, "When in calendar year 2013 do you recall first seeing Phil Luna on the Sumter Campus?" The year in question is 2015, not 2013, making the witnesses' responses irrelevant concerning when Phil Luna was first present on the Grace Homes campus.

The next problem is the witnesses themselves. The questionnaire had to be signed at the bottom of the form, giving no opportunity for confidentiality. Fehlmen noted on her list of witnesses that Rosemary Berumen "was one employee that indicated her fear of telling the truth over fear and threats of being fired." For that reason Fehlman, "sadly considers Rosemary a hostile witness" even though they worked closely together at Grace Homes.

Under these circumstances, if an employee did have information to implicate Luna as a perpetrator of sexual harassment, it is highly unlikely they would have divulged the details and then signed their name. Also, it would be obvious which employees did not participate, so it was no coincidence that all current employees named as witnesses filled out the questionnaire.

In addition, the four witnesses who could corroborate that Fehlman and Luna were indeed at Grace Homes at the same time on April 23 and 24, Katie Akin, Jocilyne Guzman Fel, Gale Kuns and Glenda Kuns, had been let go, or had quit, and did not fill out the questionnaire.

The next problem was the process. Grace Homes employment manual states that witnesses, complainant and respondent will be interviewed with a court reporter present to ensure accuracy. Yet no interviews took place. The Grace Homes Sexual Harassment Report states, "Since none of the witnesses who filled out questionnaires had witnessed any inappropriate actions between Fehlman and Luna, the Committee determined that no interviews were necessary with them. Since Fehlman would not sit for an interview and Luna's response was lengthy and detailed, the committee determined that it did not need to interview him."

Fehlman stopped cooperating with the investigation because she was fired on September 1. She was fired for insubordination because she did not want to be in the same work space as Luna.

The final problem lay with the committee members themselves. The committee leader was Steve Cameron, Grace Homes' lawyer. He was also in charge of writing the final report, which could bring a bias since he represents the business.

Another committee member was the secretary responsible for taking the board meeting minutes. These minutes played a large role in finding Luna innocent. The investigative committee cites the June 9 board of directors meeting minutes as evidence that Gale Kuns did not tell the board that Luna had assaulted his daughter. But the minutes have a statement by long time board member Phil Mohr. The minutes say, "Phil Mohr expressed his concern about what was said about what was said about Phil Luna." The sentence has the appearance of being doctored, and it is evident that something was said about Luna during the meeting and was not recorded or was removed.

Another problem with the minutes occurred at the May 11 board of directors' meeting. The minutes show that Fehlman was present at the meeting along with Luna and did not confront Luna about his assaulting her. But she was only present at the beginning to cook the customary meal that is eaten during the meeting. After she had completed her duties she left.

No End in Sight

The documents provided by Luna and Jenner to the *Valley Voice*, clearly show Gale Kuns' mismanagement of Grace Homes, and that Luna was not working for Grace Homes in January of 2015, the in-house investigative records could be flawed. When Cameron wrote that "the committee finds there was no sexual harassment by Phil Luna against Fehlman," he based his findings on a flawed questionnaire, incomplete records, and a potentially biased group of witnesses and committee members, including himself.

The result does not prove Luna's innocence or guilt. The verdict may be up to a jury. Fehlman has filed an EEOC complaint with the Federal Government, which approved her right to sue. Luna was served by the Feds on January 15.

Tule River Tribe Holds Annual Elections

Dave Adalian

The Tule River Tribal Council gained two new members and lost two incumbents during voting held Saturday at the Tule River Indian Reservation.

Joining the council from a slate of 26 candidates are Gary Santos and James Diaz. Departing after the weekend election was Joyce Carothers, who served as the council's treasurer. Councilwoman Heather Turan did not seek reelection.

"There are certain criteria to run for council. I didn't make it, which is OK, since I'm taking care of a grandbaby of mine," Turan said. "Every year we can run, so if we're still here, I'll do what I have to do to meet that criteria, and I'll run again in 2017."

There are no major issues pending before the council she said, and its business has been routine.

"Just the things we deal with every day: land, dealing with Sacramento, dealing with Washington," Turan said; however, the ongoing drought has been a central theme. "We've been working real hard on water issues. Our river dried up two years ago."

Reelected to the Council were Chairman Neil Peyron and Councilman Ryan Garfield. Completing the council are Vice Chairman Kenneth McDarment, Secretary Yolanda Gibson, and members Kevin Bonds, William Carrillo and Dwayne Garfield.

Following the balloting, Peyron, McDarment and Gibson were reelected by the council to their executive positions. Carrillo will serve as secretary for 2016.

Also on the ballot were two seats on the Tule River Elders Council and four seats on the Indian Health Advisory Board (IHAB). Winning the seats on the Elder Council were incumbent Patsy Vega and Nicola Larsen.

Third- and fourth-place finishers Raymond Flores and Ludrie Gonzales will serve as alternates. Incumbents Gayline Hunter and Barbara Baga were reelected to the IHAB, along with newcomers Richard Brown and Tule River Tribal Councilman Carrillo. Jade Garfield and Betsey Foote will serve as alternates to the IHAB.

Political Fix

Continued from p. 3

may not seem to be close philosophically to a Socialist Democrat, like Mr. Sanders, but appearances can be deceiving. Republicans and Democrats are in many ways both socialist.

Our police, firefighters, schools, roads, sewer systems, electrical grid, bridges, military, post office, buses, subways, passports, drivers license, social security, Medi-care, just to name a few services, make the United States almost as socialist as Sweden.

The only thing that is not socialist about our country is that Americans do not have the right to see a doctor. I'd like to say that you do have the right to die, but ironically you don't have that either. Americans have a right to slowly die of Mesothelioma or brain cancer, but assisted suicide is punishable by 20 to life.

But I digress.

Both Mr. Trump and Mr. Sanders were against the Iraq War, support upper income tax hikes, are against super Pacs, support campaign finance reform, and are against the Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade deal.

Are the billionaire and anti-billionaire different? Of course. Their main difference is that Bernie Sanders wants to change the world using the world's highest platform. Mr. Trump is just trying to close the biggest deal of his life.

And Finally…….

James Ward, editor of the *Visalia Times-Delta's Choices*, said in a tweet that he was looking forward to my next article on the Nordstrom debate between Visalia and Fresno saying, "I'm sure it will be heavy on feral cats and psychic mediums."

I find Mr. Ward's comments particularly offensive because, one, I am in mourning over the closing of my favorite store in Hanford, the Cosmic Corral, and two, I am not into psychic mediums but have evolved to numerology. Please take note.

We are in a "nine" vibration year and it's important to know what 2016 holds in storefor us when we take a look at it from a numerological perspective.

It's the end of an era or nine-year cycle. *We are going back to claim our future.*

For those uneducated in the ways of numerology, 2016 adds up to nine.This nine year is particularly potent in my case because my birthday is on April 9. Not only does my birthday land on a "9" but I will be turning 54, which adds up to nine. But it doesn't stop there. I was born in 1962, which adds up to 18, which is divisible by nine. Then if you add up the ages of my five kids, whose ages will not change until after my birthday, they add up to 117. Yep, that adds up to nine.

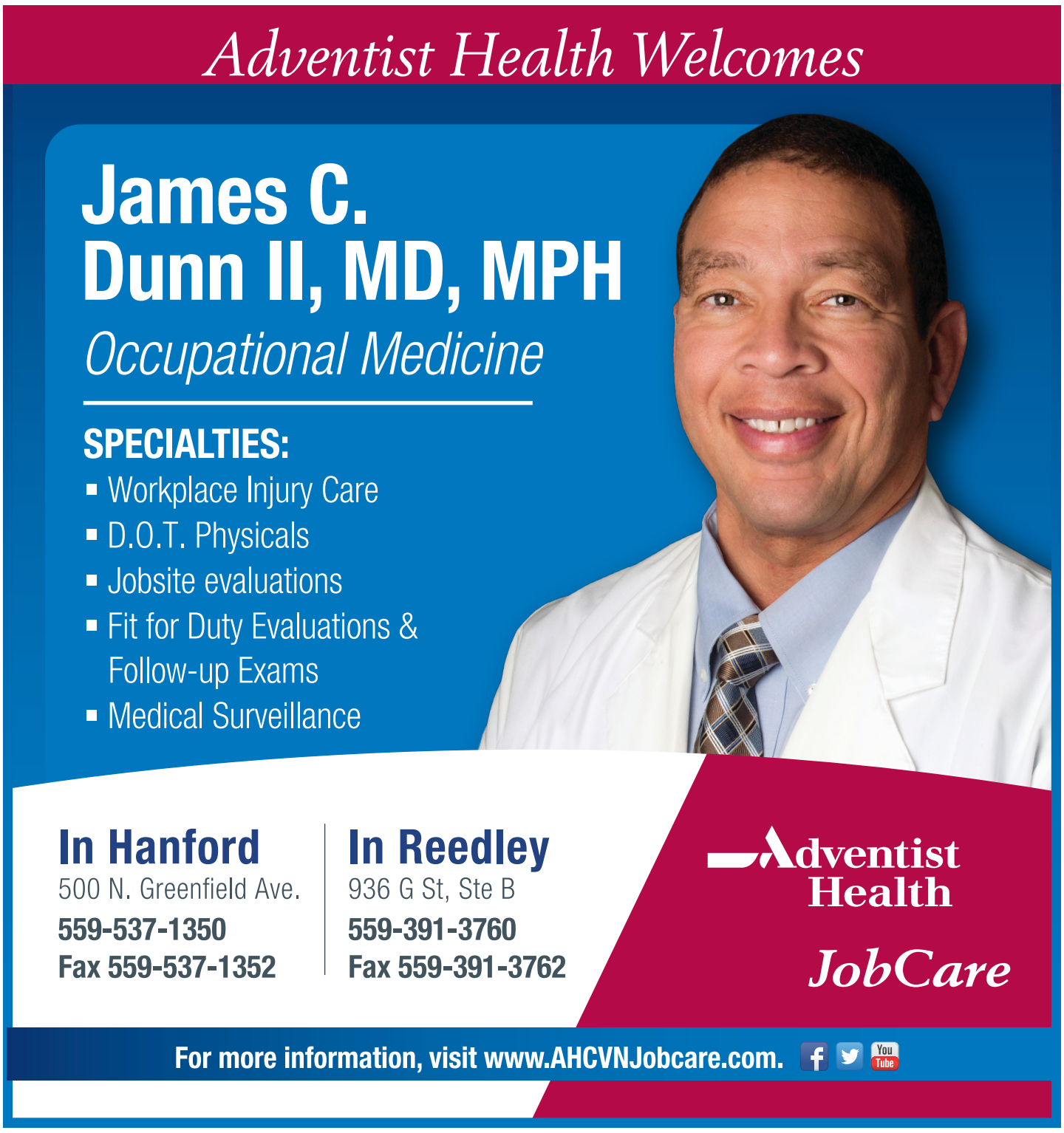
I need to include here a couple more coincidences. My mom and dad's birthdays are 11 days apart and so are my husband and my birthdays.

Then, my first born child was born 12 days after my birthday and my mom gave birth to her first born child 12 days after her birthday. That made us exactly the same age down to the day, 25 years and 12 days old when we gave birth to our first child. Both were sons.

What does this have to do with being a "9" vibration year? Nothing. But isn't it interesting?

I asked my husband, who is part German, if he believes this is a 9 vibration year.

His response was Nein.



Flood

Continued from p. 7

precisely when, where and how much is still very much a live debate," he said.

Rick Reinhardt of MBK Engineers in Sacramento said the Central Valley agricultural community had been vocal about the impacts of the 2012 plan, and those concerns are being addressed during the 2017 update.

"There is a whole host of issues farmers, rural reclamation districts and rural communities have brought up," Reinhardt said. "For example, there was a new bypass proposed to divert water from the Feather River. That part of the plan was enormously controversial. But the CVFP board took that out of the 2012 plan and directed DWR to go back and study alternatives and present them in the 2017 plan update."

Another area of concern involved a proposal to widen the bypass areas and dedicate 20 percent of that additional land to ecosystem restoration.

"That was a very large amount of land and the plan lacked a lot of specifics about what it would mean," Reinhardt said. "Another criticism is that the plan was developed without a lot of public engagement."

He said the 2017 plan update includes more opportunity for people to review drafts of the plan as they are being developed, and to comment in public workshops and forums. The update also includes two additional planning efforts: the new regional flood management planning and basin-wide feasibility studies for each river basin.

Because of the potential impacts on agriculture and rural communities, Fredrickson encouraged landowners to stay involved or to become involved in the process of updating the flood plan.

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Zumwalt

Continued from p. 1

Navy Marine Corps News before the $3.5 billion USS Zumwalt's launch. "I think it's going to sort of be the vessel that takes us from the kind of ships that we build today into ships of the future."

Agent Orange and Discrimination

Admiral Zumwalt, too, was a transitional force in the Navy, as he found himself embroiled in controversy as commander of the naval forces in Vietnam--he was the man who ordered the use of Agent Orange--and later as the youngest chief of naval operations, instituting sweeping changes to eliminate racial and sexual discrimination, and to improve the lives of sailors as the Navy's most senior officer.

"There's a good deal of indecision as to whether I am a drooling-fang militarist or a bleeding-heart liberal," Zumwalt told *Playboy* in a June 1974 interview.

After taking command, Zumwalt issued "Z Grams" ordering elimination of segregation on naval vessels, relaxing grooming standards and even allowing beer in the barracks of upper enlisted personnel.

"Changes had to be made," he told the Navy Marine Corps News in an interview shortly before his death in 2000.

'The US Navy's Conscience'

His reforms were met by resistance from fellow officers, yet were widely praised by the rank and file, as well as the media. In 1998, Zumwalt was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by Bill Clinton for his efforts at parity.

"When historians look back at the century we have just left, " Clinton said while presenting the award, "they will certainly recall that Bud Zumwalt was (the US Navy's) conscience."

Zumwalt saw the reforms as fair, but implemented them primarily as a way to maximize the Navy's ability to do its job.

"There is no black Navy, no white Navy--just one Navy--the United States Navy," he said in one of his Z Grams.

'A Man of Honor'

Retired history teacher Kent McNatt, a veteran of the Vietnam war and a member of Tulare's AMVETS Post 56, knew Zumwalt and praised him as a man of high integrity.

"The man was a man of honor. He always was," said McNatt, who taught for 35 years at Tulare Union High School, from which Zumwalt graduated. "He exemplified the word 'honor.' For someone to say how they feel about the naming of this class of ship, it's very appropriate."

Zumwalt was also personable, McNatt said, and returned frequently to TUHS to speak to students.

"He was a nice guy, very eloquent speaker," McNatt said. "He was very motivational. He was a tremendous role model."

Zumwalt's integrity is perhaps best exemplified by his actions during the Vietnam War, a conflict he personally opposed, but which he fought to win.

"I thought it was the wrong war, in the wrong place, at the wrong time," Zumwalt said.

That didn't stop him from sending his own son, Elmo R. Zumwalt III, into the Mekong Delta as commander of a swift boat. Later, when both men suspected Agent Orange was responsible for the cancer that eventually killed Zumwalt III, and likely caused the severe disability of Zumwalt III's son, Russell, the senior Zumwalt expressed both his anguish, as well as his resolve he would do the same thing again given the same circumstances.

"Knowing what I know now, I still would have ordered the defoliation to achieve the objectives I did," Zumwalt wrote in his autobiography. "But that does not ease the sorrow I feel for Elmo, or the anguish his illness, and Russell's disability, give me. It is the first thing I think of when I awake in the morning, and the last thing I remember when I go to sleep."

Hanford Fox to Reopen

After nearly two years of renovation, the Hanford Fox theater--closed since March 20, 2014, when a large section of the concrete ceiling failed--is finally expected to reopen this spring. The new concrete, textured to match the old decor, actually hangs seven inches lower than previously.

Dan Humason, whose family owns the theater, is trying to reopen the venue before the Jackson Browne concert scheduled for April 30. While tickets for that show have been on sale since January 15, Humason intends to hold some test events to prove that the new ventilation and wiring are in working order.

The Hanford Fox last hosted a concert in March, 2014.

Hanford

Continued from p. 1

The museum already has a website, along with a Facebook, Twitter and Instagram presence which links to other visitor resources. Dickerson said that social media is critical to running a successful Visitor Information Center; given the fact that 90% of Americans have immediate access to the internet, this is even more so for European and Canadian tourists. 94% of tourists use the internet to decide where to travel, live, work, and establish a business, she added.

A recent social media success story was when the museum used the many platforms to publicize its Flashlight Tour. They anticipated 100 guests; however,the tour received a sellout of 230 guests and had to turn away another 50 due to lack of space and time constraints.

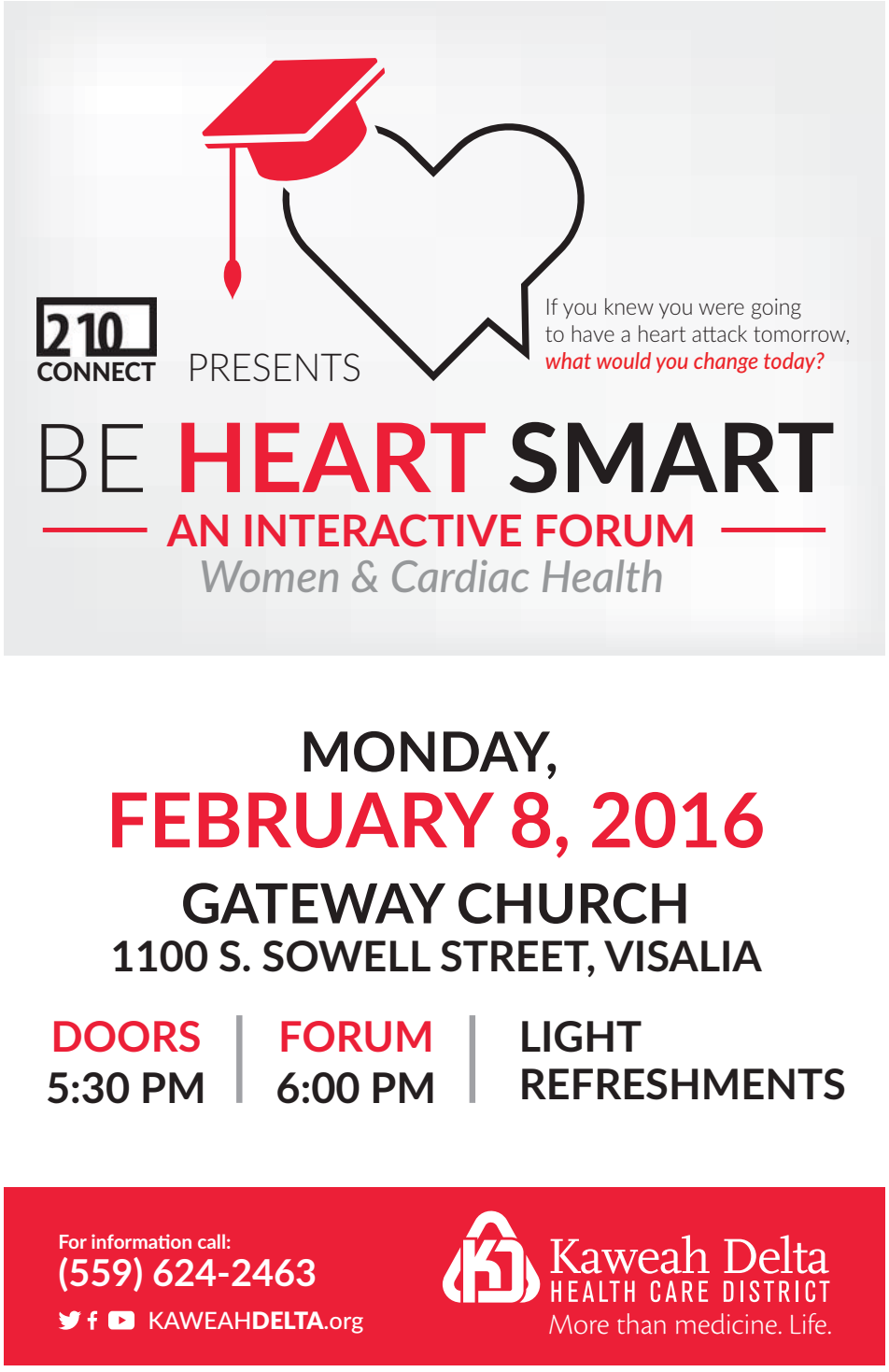
The museum is already planning a variety of events and will host a tour of historic downtown Hanford on March 5.

"This will be one of the first walking tours we are bringing back that was done by the former visitor's center," Dickerson said. "The tour on March 5, 2016 will start at approximately 10:45am. We will visit the Hanford Carnegie Museum, Taoist Temple, Kings Art Center, Fox Theater and the Episcopal Church. Dave Jones is leading the tour and the Hanford Carnegie Museum are the hosts. The old tour guides were referred to as the 'Showoffs,' - we are changing the name to the 'Hanford Carnegie Historians.'"

The Hanford City Council was encouraging of the museum's efforts, but brought up the fact that there are already two organizations that perform many of the things in themuseum proposal. The two organizations, Main Street Hanford and the Hanford Chamber of Commerce, receive combined funding of more than $168,000 per year to promote tourism and attract Central Valley locals to Hanford.

According to the *Hanford Sentinel*, "Mayor Justin Mendes said the council will decide how to proceed with the Carnegie's proposal, as well as the renewal of city agreements with Main Street Hanford and the Hanford Chamber of Commerce, during its goal-setting session later this month."

The Carnegie Museum is located at 109 E. 8th Street. Its hours of operation are Wednesday through Saturday, 11am-5pm. The museum conducts tours on Saturday, at 1pm and 2:30pm, or by appointment. To make an appointment, call 559 584-1367.



The Sheriff's Public Outreach Team Wraps Up First Successful Year

Catherine Doe

During the last Republican debate, Ohio Governor John Kasich said, "The people want the community and law enforcement to come together." That is exactly what Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux has been doing since being elected in 2014. One of his goals for the Tulare County Sheriff's Department (TCSD) was to create the Sheriff's Public Outreach Team (SPOT). With one more quarterly meeting planned for spring of 2016, SPOT became a reality and is completing its first successful year.

Participants of SPOT are community members from diverse backgrounds who offer the TCSD fresh ideas and provide feedback on how to better serve the community. The members are from various communities, to name a few. The participants make a one-year commitment and after their year is over, they are asked to recommend other members of the community to replace them. The community advisory committee meets quarterly at the sheriff's department.

One of the issues tackled by SPOT was the acquisition of body cameras. The discussion revolved around the cost versus the benefit of buying and using the cameras. The cameras won the debate. Boudreaux also wanted SPOT's feedback on changing the name of the Police Activities League (PAL) to Sheriff's Jr. Explorers. Armondo Apodaca, chair of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, thought the idea of rebranding and keeping things fresh is always a good idea.

The sheriff's department, and law enforcement's relationship in general, with the Hispanic community was one of the big issues taken on by SPOT. It wasn't on the agenda, but was brought to light by Lali Moheno, former Tulare County supervisor and agricultural labor advocate. What ensued was a lively debate about the sometimes mutual distrust between the two communities. As a result, an educational video was produced to ease tensions in the community.

The TCSD hired a professional film crew to produce the educational video in English and in Spanish to illustrate why the sheriff's department's procedures are what they are. Every 63 hours an officer is killed in the line of duty in the US, and that fact is what shapes law enforcement's protocol for traffic stops. Because a driver could be concealing a gun, deputies ask drivers to keep their hands on the steering wheel during a traffic stop. A deputy will also ask the back seat passengers to put down their window and put their hands on the front head rest.

Moheno said that many in the Hispanic community, including herself, didn't understand that the sheriff's department had a right to pull over drivers on the highway. She said that they felt they were being targeted or profiled. As a result of the committee meetings and the video, it is now clear that it is not just the Highway Patrol's job to conduct traffic stops.

Art Pena, of Pena's Disposal in Cutler, expressed that he was very appreciative of the video produced by the sheriff's department, but added that the Hispanic community needs to also take some responsibility for the distrust between two.

The January 14 meeting was the third quarterly meeting for SPOT and Boudreaux used the opportunity to show off Deputy BuzzBee. The inspiration for Deputy BuzzBee came to Boudreaux during a visit to Disneyland. At first the sheriff department's new mascot was not embraced, but now Deputy BuzzBee has taken on a life of his own, with an overflowing calendar of events. The department has been hard pressed to keep up with the community's demand. The new mascot visits schools and participates in parades primarily to interact with children and foment trust between law enforcement and Tulare County youth. Boudreaux said that Deputy BuzzBee's message to the kids is to "be safe, be nice and be honest."

Another aspect of the sheriff's department that Boudreaux introduced at the meeting was a new tool to create a trusting community within the 800 employees that make up the department. Each month employees can click on a message made just for them that are made by various people in the department, but every quarter Boudreaux gives the message. One of his videos shown during the meeting communicated Boudreaux' goals for the department and ended with a quote from Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see."

SPOT members were quick to suggest that the sheriff's department produce a similar video message for all of Tulare County and put it on their public website.

Boudreaux used the end of the meeting to update the committee on the purchase of two drones and a second department airplane. The drones need to be approved by the FCC and the department is in the process of applying to get approval for them. The goal of a second plane is so that Tulare County can have a plane in the air everyday. With only one plane there was a lot of down time for repairs and maintenance.

Boudreaux wrapped up the meeting by getting last comments from members. Larry Peltzer, a farmer in Ivanhoe, wanted to thank the sheriff for the department's fast response to a possible theft of water from one of his wells and for eradicating the pot grows in his area. Boudreaux commented that his department has been working hard on improving response times.

Boudreaux ended by saying is that what the community needs to see is that we listen.

Moheno replied, "You are open sheriff, so far so good."

Pathways Program Announces First Scholarship Recipients

Catherine Doe

Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux was able to fulfill one more of his campaign promises with the introduction of the first Pathways Scholarship recipients. During his campaign, Boudreaux along Kim Oviatt, president of the Sence Foundation, discussed creating a scholarship program to keep youth in the county who want to pursue a career in law enforcement.

Oviatt brought the idea to the Sence Foundation Board and it was a unanimous decision to fund the scholarship. On January 8, Boudreaux was proud to announce the first recipients of the Pathways Scholarship.

The purpose of Pathways is to put local youth who are interested in a career in law enforcement back in their communities. The program pays their tuition for the police academy after graduation from a two-or four-year college. Pathways scholarship recipients are then guaranteed a deputy position with the Tulare County Sheriff's Department upon graduation from the academy.

The Sence Foundation, which supports education and medical research, fully funds the Pathways Program.

"We have a niche for law enforcement and particularly for the Tulare County Sheriff's Office," Oviatt said. "The Sheriff's Pathways Program was a perfect fit."

Since 1985, the Foundation has given more than $10 million to Tulare County charities.

Young adults ages 17-20, who volunteer with the Sheriff's Explorer Program, are eligible to apply for the scholarship. Boudreaux realized, while serving as undersheriff, that there is no follow-up to the Explorer Program to grab ahold of youth who excel in academics and want a career in law enforcement. Boudreaux wanted a vehicle in which to mentor the Explorers through college and then provide them the means to attend the academy.

The sheriff's department also has a Police Activities League, or PAL program. PAL is an after-school crime prevention program that helps facilitate positive relationships between police officers and youth. The teenage members of the Explorers complete many community service hours running or helping PAL with its activities. PAL will be transitioning to a new name in the coming months to Sheriff's Junior Explorers.

As part of the application process for the scholarship, each candidate had to write an essay and complete an interview, as well as participate in the Explorer Program.The five Sheriff's Pathways Program scholarship recipients were:

- Joseph Banda, a Porterville College student majoring in Administrative Justice
- Samantha Elias, a senior at Magnet Academy in Porterville
- Hector Negrete, a student at San Joaquin Valley College
- Jasmine Orozco, a senior at Fresno State University
- Daniel Luna, a student at Reedley College

"What you see before you, is the future of the sheriff's department," Sheriff Boudreaux said. "I'm looking forward to pinning those badges on them," he said. "[They] are truly an investment."

Banda, Negrete, and Luna all plan on getting their associate degree then going straight to the police academy. Elias and Orozco plan on getting their four-year degree before joining the academy. Orozco will be done with her four-year degree at Fresno State this spring. Having completed a four-year degree leads to faster promotions within the department which could make one of these two women Tulare County's first female Sheriff.

All of the Pathways recipients continue to do community service and go on ride-alongs. Many of the ride-alongs are routine calls, but some are drug-related or domestic abuse situations where the Explorers have been asked to translate from Spanish.

One of the more dramatic ride-alongs that Elias, the youngest of the group, was on involved a fatal traffic accident. The sheriff deputy's car stopped at the scene of the accident where a woman was wedged between two cars. She was about to be declared deceased when she started talking. The woman ultimately survived.

Elias and Orozco had similar reasons for wanting to pursue a career in law enforcement. Coming from rough neighborhoods rife with drugs and gangs, both had seen the other side of the law. They also saw, at their high schools, schoolmates in their Explorer uniforms going on excursions with the sheriff's department. One day when she was 15-years old, Orozco asked what the Explorers were doing and one of the girls encouraged her to come along.

She joined the Explorers and has never looked back.

Briefly...

TULARE COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION ESTABLISHED

Early this year, the Tulare County Taxpayers Association was founded with the goal of preventing new tax increases and wasteful government spending, defending Proposition 13, and promoting a positive, pro-growth business climate in Tulare County.

The Executive Board of the organization consists of longtime Tulare County residents Chris Telfer (Western Utilities – President), Ryan Jennings (Principal Financial – Vice-President), Clayton Reynolds (Exeter Irrigation District – Director of Records), and Cody De Silva (Clark Pest Control – Director of Finance). David Telfer of Telfer & Sons Construction will serve as Executive Director.

"Tulare County has a strong record of fiscal responsibility, but the people need an organization that will focus on furthering that and holding our representatives accountable," President Chris Telfer stated, "the Tulare County Taxpayers Association will stand up to government waste, and work with businesses and individuals in our county to promote a pro-growth tax climate."

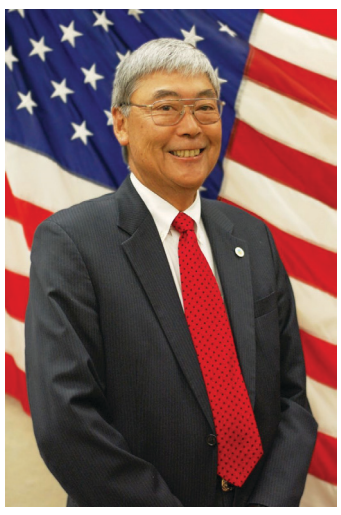
The Tulare County Taxpayers Association plans on becoming active in this major election year by endorsing local and state-wide candidates that espouse the organization's goals and ensuring voters are aware of the many tax measures on this year's ballots. More information can be found at www.tularetaxpayers.com.

Voices of the Valley

Allen Ishida

Nancy Vigran

He is well-known by his constituents, who greet him with a handshake or a hug at an Exeter eatery. He is recognized throughout the county as a familiar face--who some see as an authority figure. And, perhaps not yet known by the general population around California, he may soon be.



Allen Ishida is the Tulare County Supervisor for District One. Courtesy/Tulare County

For 11 years, Allen Ishida has served Tulare County as a member of the Board of Supervisors. He is finishing up his 12th year now. Just how his time has gone and where he intends to direct his attention next was the focus of this interview. It is no secret that he will seek governorship of California.

Where he has been is an important factor in where he wants to go, he said. It is not just that he served as a supervisor, but the things that have happened and what part he has played during that role, that helps qualify him for head of state.

Ishida is a native of Tulare County--his grandparents moved to a Japanese colony in Lindsay in the 1900's. His grandfather started farming with the Keeley family, and his father and uncles invested in their own farming businesses. Likewise, Ishida and his siblings are also farmers, growing citrus including Valencias, navels, easy-peel oranges and lemons.

It took Ishida a while to settle down into farming, though. After earning a degree in business administration from Fresno State, he went to work for the US Department of Agriculture, managing its California offices; he had a stint in sales with the Xerox Corporation, and he worked for 20 years selling commercial real estate, mostly agricultural land, in a large firm with offices around the state.

Throughout these experiences, especially through farming, he said, he has dealt with a plethora of regulations. He hoped, by being elected as a county supervisor, he could have a positive impact and reduce red tape.

"What I found out was that the county basically administers what the state regulates," he said. "But it does make a difference in how those regulations are administered."

Coming in as a supervisor, Ishida said, "I think my main frustration was with Resource Management Agency management."

Getting permits and zoning was extremely slow and complicated.

"Now we have the ability (within the county) to issue a permit within 30 days, if properly zoned," he said.

"A conditional-use permit may now take about 90 days," he said. "It used to take years."

In Tulare County, we now have a reputation for being open to business--I think that is an important asset to our county."

Some of the other positive things that have happened during Ishida's time in office include:

- Step-Up Program
- Measure R
- Receipt of US Funds for Eradication of Federal Land
- Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study

Step-Up

Formed in 2007, Step-Up Tulare County is the culmination of a joint effort between the county, law enforcement, schools, businesses, community organizations, faith-based groups and residents to combat gangs and provide more positive opportunities for at-risk youth in the community.

Step-Up offers $100,000 grant funding to non-profit community groups throughout the county through the Youth Activities Grant Fund aiming to improve the quality of life for those at-risk under 18 years. Each of the five county districts is allotted $20,000, and grants are awarded in $5,000 and $10,000 increments.

Measure R

Measure R was passed in November, 2006, implementing a half-cent sales tax throughout Tulare County to help meet and improve transportation countywide. The 30-year tax will generate more than $652 million to help meet the county's needs.

"Measure R was a tremendous boom for us," Ishida said.

So far, it has allowed the widening of Highway 99 and improved unincorporated area roads, he added.

According to the Measure R website, 50% of Measure R funds are to be used for regional projects, such as the widening of Highway 99, freeway interchange improvements and increasing safety and reconstruction of major commute areas.

Thirty-five percent of funds are allocated for local programs to improve transportation for any member city of the Tulare County Association of Governments (TCAG). Fourteen percent of Measure R funds raised are used for public transit projects, bike lanes and environmental mitigation project.

Funding to Aid Eradication of Marijuana in National Forest

Since part of the Sequoia National Forest is within Tulare County, it was part of a bill passed by the US Senate Appropriations Committee to receive assistance funding for park historic preservation and eradication in 2007, according to documentation from Senator Dianne Feinstein's office. Tulare County received $300,000 allocated to the county's sheriff department to eradicate marijuana grows on national forest lands.

Tulare Lake Basin Study

Tulare County was the lead agency in the Tulare Lake Basin Disadvantaged Community Water Study, which also included the counties of Kings, Kern and Fresno, and was completed last year, Ishida said.

"I am really proud of that report," he said. "It outlines water issues for small communities."

Because of it, the Tulare County Water Commission has been resurrected, he said, which has been active.

"We've been able to obtain grants for disadvantaged communities," he said.

This is all part of the county aiding communities during the drought.

The county has hired a water analyst, Ishida said.

"Tulare County is positioned better on water issues than most counties in the Valley," he added.

Boards and Committees

Through his position, Ishida serves on many committees and boards. Some of those include the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC) Board, State Freight Advisory Committee, California Rail Advisory Committee, San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, San Joaquin Valley Policy Council and TCAG.

The Sierra Nevada region provides more than 60% of the state's developed water supply. It also provides habitat for a diverse range of wildlife and provides renewable energy generation.

In his fifth year with the SNC board, Ishida said the main priority is watershed restoration to provide more water for the area and the state, and reduce fire risk.

Railroads and High-Speed Rail

During his service, Ishida has gained a lot of insight into railroads, both freight and passenger. Being a member of one rail-related committee lead him to another and another.

"We've saved the rail (tracks) from Strathmore to Fresno," he said. "If we had been able to save it to Bakersfield, we could have sent logs to Terra Bella."

Ishida was referring to salvaging wood from forest fires and drought, and selling it for profit. While it could have been trucked down, the cost would have been prohibitive, he said.

"Now we have 30 million dead trees and they are just going to burn up," he said.

The rails and railroads continue to be important for industrial use, Ishida said. Again, it is part of economic development and being open to business, he added.

With his knowledge and expertise, Ishida is against High-Speed Rail, at this time, he said.

"I am in favor of buying the complete right away, at this time."

And, he said, he feels in the future, High-Speed Rail should come. But, a lot of technology may happen first.

"We're going to be subsidizing High-Speed Rail forever," he said. "Public transit does not pay for itself. Rider fares only pay for 15% of services – the rest someone else is subsidizing.

"The maintenance on rail is very expensive, especially passenger rail."

The 15% Ishida refers to is an average and includes various forms of transit including city buses, he said.

Amtrak rates the San Joaquin line within its Top 5 revenue versus cost sources in the country, Ishida said.

"But it still doesn't pay for itself," he added.

As for High-Speed Rail, "we're just not ready for it," he said. "Who the hell is going to use it from Merced to Bakersfield – we're going to have 20 years of killing weeds and no usage.

"It will be expensive to ride, especially because of the speed."

San Joaquin Valley Policy Council

The SJVP council is made up of eight county transportation authorities including Tulare County, for which Ishida is the representative. With the help of congressmen Devin Nunes and Jim Costa, funding was made available for widening Highway 99 (not only in Tulare County with the help of Measure R funds) up to Stockton, Ishida said.

This council is also looking at the possibility of widening Interstate 5 to six lanes, he added.

Taking It Up to the Next Level

"Because of my service as supervisor, I understand how dysfunctional the State of California is," Ishida said.

"I think a strong government can fix most of the bureaucratic red tape," he added. "Most legislation is written by bureaucrats, not legislature. The executive branch can amend a lot."

For example, Ishida said, the internal reporting on human health can be streamlined, with a reduction in cost for the state and counties.

However, "the biggest issue, is a lack of economic opportunity for our young people in the State of California," he said, adding, "We used to worry about them graduating and moving out the area, now it is out of state."

"We need to open up the state for business," he said. "We have about killed business in this state."

This is one of the platforms for his upcoming campaign. Another is water.

There are three main facets to the water issue, he said.

- Surface water storage, which provides groundwater storage.
- Clean up and reuse of municipal wastewater.
- Restoring the infrastructure.

Sixty percent of the state's water comes from the Sierra Nevada, Ishida said.

"We need to build more dams, everywhere we can build them."

Ishida did say he isunsure about the status of global warming.

"But I'm an old Boy Scout," he said, "Be Prepared."

Ishida does have concerns about air quality and feels that poor air quality due to forest fires is not being addressed, while the public is being regulated too much.

"Sixty percent of the soot (in the air) comes from forest fires," he said. "The state and feds will not address the issues of air quality and forest fires."

"The Rough Fire caused the worst air pollution in the Valley during my lifetime," he added.

Ishida is against the legalization of marijuana for recreational use.

"I am not against it for medical use," he said, "but we need to change the designation, so that it can be purchased at the pharmacy.

"Most of the dispensary clientele are recreational users."

ISHIDA continued on **16 »**

Viewpoint

A Time of Transition

Todd Oto, Ed.D., Superintendent

The beginning of the spring semester of the 2015-2016 school yearis a time of transition for Visalia Unified. As you may know, Craig Wheaton, our superintendent for the past five and half years, has accepted a position as deputy superintendent for Tulare County Office of Education. In an earlier article, he outlined the accomplishments of our district during his tenure, including the continuous increase in academic achievement, a graduation rate thatsignificantly exceeds the state average, the opening of a new elementary school and, soon, a new middle school—all while successfully guiding Visalia Unified through the recession. We wish Dr. Wheaton well as he takes on the responsibilities of his new position.

In November 2015, I was named the interim superintendent of Visalia Unified. As interim superintendent, my role will be to ensure that the school district functions smoothly until the new superintendent is named. This involves maintaining all of the services and activities currently being provided by the district to support learning and achievement for all students. We have much work in progress, including the ongoing transition to the new state standards, our growing systems for academic and personal support for students at all levels, and our efforts supporting teachers in their work with students. Currently, the Visalia Unified School Board is considering the process and timeline for selecting the new superintendent. Our organization has strong and capable staff at all levels, and I am confident that the interim period will be one of seamless transition.

On a personal note, I am honored to be the interim superintendent of our district. This is my 28th year with Visalia Unified, the only district that I have known as an educator. My career began at Mt. Whitney High School in 1987, where I taught drafting and woodshop. I was a dean at Mt. Whitney for one year and then an assistant principal at Redwood High School for five years. In 2004, I was selected as principal of Sequoia High School; and in 2006, I was named principal of Redwood. In 2010, I became an Area Superintendent, with oversight of alternative education; in 2012, I became an Assistant Superintendent, with oversight of secondary education (middle schools and high schools); and in 2015, my position was expanded to oversee the entire Instructional Services division, which includes all 40 of our schools. Having worked at many levels within our district, I have knowledge of all aspects of our schools. As interim superintendent, I will become more familiar with the financial and human resources systems that, along with instruction, represent the whole of our district's organization.

I look forward to learning more about Visalia Unified in my new position; and I am excited to be leading an organization in which I have grown up--one that is engaged in many great things that are bringing education, achievement, and options for the future to the 28,000 students whom it serves.

Hospitals Seeking Our Support

Joey Airoso
President, TC Farm Bureau

The election cycle in 2016 will be a busy one indeed, not just because we elect a new president for our nation, but for a variety of issues much closer to home as well. Both the Tulare District Hospital and the Kaweah Delta Healthcare District are anticipating reaching out to voters to pass bonds for major construction.

I had lunch with the CEO, Lindsay Mann of the Kaweah Delta Healthcare District in November, and discussed the projects they envision building, and the mandates they are under to completely upgrade and replace their acute care facility as required by state law by 2030.

These expansions and the new Kaweah Delta acute facility will costs millions of dollars, which local taxpayers are going to have to agree to support thru the passage of general obligation bonds. Grants, loans, and philanthropic donations are also part of the formula for funding, but let's be clear, local tax payers are going to have to agree to these bonds if they want to continue having hospitals here.

Unfortunately you can expect that the largest tax burden will fall on landowners, and namely farmers will feel that pain in their tax assessments each year. It's difficult to see the costs associated with these bonds, and know that our tax assessments get bigger and bigger, but so do our needs for water and other farm inputs, which are not going to get cheaper.

Without more water in this Valley, the agriculture economy is going to suffer, and so will our ability to pay these bonds. Agriculture like everything else in business cannot continue to bear the higher and higher costs of doing business in California without addressing some of these concerns.

As citizens we all need to care about the water availability for exactly this reason. Our farms do not just support food production and jobs, but water means commerce and commerce allows rural infrastructure to be built and services like hospitals to be provided to our communities. Without water, farms can't pay for bonds to support these services. We all need to work together to support our local economy and ensure we keep our farms and families safe and healthy.

"Modernizing" the Opportunities for Nuclear War

Lawrence S. Wittner

A fight now underway over newly-designed U.S. nuclear weapons highlights how far the Obama administration has strayed from its commitment to build a nuclear-free world.

The fight, as a recent New York Times article indicates, concerns a variety of nuclear weapons that the U.S. military is currently in the process of developing or, as the administration likes to say, "modernizing." Last year, the Pentagon flight-tested a mock version of the most advanced among them, the B61 Model 12. This redesigned nuclear weapon is the country's first precision-guided atomic bomb, with a computer brain and maneuverable fins that enable it to more accurately target sites for destruction. It also has a "dial-a-yield" feature that allows its handlers to adjust the level of its explosive power.

Supporters of this revamped weapon of mass destruction argue that, by ensuring greater precision in bombing "enemy" targets, reducing the yield of a nuclear blast, and making a nuclear attack more "thinkable," the B61 Model 12 is actually a more humanitarian and credible weapon than older, bigger versions. Arguing that this device would reduce risks for civilians near foreign military targets, James Miller, who developed the nuclear weapons modernization plan while undersecretary of defense, stated in a recent interview that "minimizing civilian casualties if deterrence fails is both a more credible and a more ethical approach."

Other specialists were far more critical. The Federation of Atomic Scientists pointed out that the high accuracy of the weapon and its lower settings for destructiveness might tempt military commanders to call for its use in a future conflict.

General James E. Cartright, a former head of the U.S. Strategic Command and a retired vice chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, conceded that possessing a smaller nuclear device did make its employment "more thinkable." But he supported developing the weapon because of its presumed ability to enhance nuclear deterrence. Using a gun as a metaphor, he stated: "It makes the trigger easier to pull but makes the need to pull the trigger less likely."

Another weapon undergoing U.S. government "modernization" is the cruise missile. Designed for launching by U.S. bombers, the weapon—charged William Perry, a former secretary of defense—raised the possibilities of a "limited nuclear war." Furthermore, because cruise missiles can be produced in nuclear and non-nuclear versions, an enemy under attack, uncertain which was being used, might choose to retaliate with nuclear weapons.

Overall, the Obama administration's nuclear "modernization" program—including not only redesigned nuclear weapons, but new nuclear bombers, submarines, land-based missiles, weapons labs, and production plants—is estimated to cost as much as $1 trillion over the next thirty years. Andrew C. Weber, a former assistant secretary of defense and former director of the interagency body that oversees America's nuclear arsenal, has criticized it as "unaffordable and unneeded." After all, the U.S. government already has an estimated 7,200 nuclear weapons.

The nuclear weapons modernization program is particularly startling when set against President Obama's April 2009 pledge to build a nuclear weapons-free world. Although this public commitment played a large part in his receipt of the Nobel Peace Prize that year, in succeeding years the administration's action on this front declined precipitously. It did manage to secure a strategic arms reduction treaty (New START) with Russia in 2010 and issue a pledge that same year that the U.S. government would "not develop new nuclear warheads." But, despite promises to bring the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to the Senate for ratification and to secure further nuclear arms agreements with Russia, nuclear disarmament efforts ground to a halt. Instead, plans for "nuclear modernization" began. The president's 2016 State of the Union address contained not a word about nuclear disarmament, much less a nuclear weapons-free world.

What happened?

Two formidable obstacles derailed the administration's nuclear disarmament policy. At home, powerful forces moved decisively to perpetuate the U.S. nuclear weapons program: military contractors, the weapons labs, top military officers, and, especially, the Republican Party. Republican support for disarmament treaties was crucial, for a two-thirds vote of the U.S. Senate was required to ratify them. Thus, when the Republicans abandoned the nuclear arms control and disarmament approach of past GOP presidents and ferociously attacked the Obama administration for "weakness" or worse, the administration beat an ignominious retreat. To attract the backing of Republicans for the New START Treaty, it promised an upgraded U.S. nuclear weapons program.

Russia's lack of interest in further nuclear disarmament agreements with the United States provided another key obstacle. With 93 percent of the world's nuclear weapons in the arsenals of these two nations, a significant reduction in nuclear weapons hinged on Russia's support for it. But, angered by the sharp decline of its power in world affairs, including NATO's advance to its borders, the Russian government engaged in its own nuclear buildup and spurned U.S. disarmament proposals.

Despite these roadblocks, the Obama administration could renew the nuclear disarmament process. Developing better relations with Russia, for example by scrapping NATO's provocative expansion plan, could smooth the path toward a Russian-American nuclear disarmament agreement. And this, in turn, would soften the objections of the lesser nuclear powers to reducing their own nuclear arsenals. If Republican opposition threatened ratification of a disarmament treaty, it could be bypassed through an informal U.S.-Russian agreement for parallel weapons reductions. Moreover, even without a bilateral agreement, the U.S. government could simply scrap large portions of its nuclear arsenal, as well as plans for modernization. Does a country really need thousands of nuclear weapons to deter a nuclear attack? Britain possesses only 215. And the vast majority of the world's nations don't possess any.

Given the terrible dangers and costs posed by nuclear weapons, isn't it time to get back on the disarmament track?

Comments & Letters

The comments below are from last issue's story, "**Former Long-Time Grace Homes Employee Sues the Ministry**"

"Sherrie has my full support. I know her to be a truthful person of high integrity. She worked there for 30 years and is then fired within hours of the complaint coming down in her favor – how ridiculous for the supposed ministry. I've run large departments before and you don't fire people who have had legitimate complaints. Do they think that labor law does not apply to them? Mr. Luna has brought shame and discredit to the ministry, and the board was foolish and opened themselves to liability for reinstating him. He should be out and a new person put in place to get this ministry back on track."

— *Marcus Smith*

"I am a former employee of Grace Homes , I work there for 5 years. Mr Kuns was my Boss, he loved those kids and he is a great man with a great heart. I knew Mr Luna and the board and they are not stand up people. They allowed others to lie and they did not check the facts. Chico CCL, Phil Luna and the board were lied to and not one of them check the facts. I have no respect for them. Mr and Mrs Kuns I wish you well."

— *Lanell wren*

"The real issue here is that the Kuns are corrupt. They stole money from state by claiming to be good people! It's all an act people! They are the best actors. Now Sherri is crying wolf because they are out of all the money they ripped off from the state. I'd be in a frenzy too if I wasn't making $8,000 per kid a month! I worked there, and left after I how the money was being used there! They never cared about those children!!!! Those children were walking paychecks to them! Now that they can't have what they want they are crying wolf!!!! Which is unbelievable!!! There are people have actually been sexually victimized Sherri, and you accusing an innocent man!!!!"

— *The Kuns are money hungry crazy people*

"I am a former employee of the Grace homes. I worked there while it was still being run by Gale Kuns and his family. When I originally started working for this organization I thought it was a great organization. I was wrong. The Kuns family cut corners on a lot of things including staff training. They put staff and clients at risk regularly. During my time working there I had worked in almost every position. I was a campus supervisor for most of my employment there. The staff were supposed to be trained in non-violent crisis intervention which is usually a minimum of eight hours of training for the certificate. Sherrie Kuns stated she was certified to train the staff for this certificate. The staff received only 3 hours of training and was given their cards. I was demoted from campus supervisor shortly after this training for making a CPS report when my supervisors failed to do so. I worked as a house staff for a few more months. My last night of work at the campus there was an incident with a client who was trying to kill herself. I did everything I was supposed to do according the training I had been given by the Kuns family. I learned that night that my training was not valid or long enough to hold the certification that I was given. I was placed on administrative leave due to the incident and was not given a date to return. I contacted the Labor Board the following morning and had learned that according to state law I was terminated illegally. I filed my claim with the labor board. during to time I was filling out the paperwork at the labor board I also learned that they were short paying us for the time we worked and had us working illegally. I filled additional claims and won all of my law suits against the company. I was the first of ten employees who filed additional claims with the labor board. The Kuns family is corrupt and takes advantage of people on a regular basis. Before they start trying to criticize anyone they need to remember that there are still plenty of people that know that families dirty little secrets and it will all come out. I as well as several other staff are the ones that reported everything to the state and community care licensing to make sure this family could not due any more damage to staff or clients. It may have taken three years but I am very thankful they were finally removed from the property and not allowed to be part of the operations anymore. The only regret I have is that it took 6 years of employment before I stepped up. If I could do it again I would have reported sooner and been a better advocate for the staff and clients."

— *Carly Hughes*

"I have to say I have known Sherrie Kuns-Fehlman for over 20 years. I could never imagine questioning her honesty or her moral standing. I give her credit for standing up for herself against someone who has done her wrong on many different moral levels. I believe her wholeheartedly. I pray for the truth to prevail and I hope when it does there are criminal charges facing Mr Luna. Stealing is one thing, but thinking you have the right to make sexual and improper advances, etc.. That is far worse. Its sad our society still has issue with believing the victim, usually a woman or a child, instead of embracing & trusting them for not cowering down and standing up for themselves."

— *Denise Bustillos*

"The truth is out there you just need to talk to the right people."

— *Carrie Brigman*

"What is disingenuous is to quote a board member who is unwilling to identify him/herself. None of this persons statements holds any weight and must be dismissed. The board member can say anything. If the statements are true – and can be proven have the courage to state who you are. . . its called spinning the story. To dismiss Kuns – Fehlman and the other women's allegations is a derelict of duty and unbecoming of board member. I encourage the writer to fully investigate this further to discover the process if any the board took in response to these women. Regarding the statements made regarding Mr. Kuns there are means and ways to discover the truth separate from this unknown board member.

So what was and was to remain a vital ministry not only in Visalia but serving the whole state of California has become a victim of the selfish and misdirected leadership.

Literally what is at risk is "throwing out the baby with the bath water. . ."

The list of victims is beyond these dismissed women, beyond the attempt to dismantle the Kuns family legacy and the good work the staff which served all these years. Not this isn't painful enough. The list of victims grows to all the young girls, pregnant young women, baby's and boys who will remain dismissed, denied and demeaned.

Who now will be the hands, the feet and the heart of God and will over the very grace that is the very motive of this ministry. Thus – "THE GRACE HOME" – Who will meet these where they are with the gift of this truth "my plans are not to harm you or hurt you, but offer you a hope and a future."

[Ed. Note: Without anonymous sources, we never would have had the Watergate story.]"

— *Joel Wilsey*

"I worked for the Grace Homes on two separate occasions. First from 1993-1995 I also worked for the Group Home for a short period of time in 2003. I returned after working for 8 years at a higher level group home in Fresno. When I came back the second time the person they had in charge of human resources was upset that she was not the one who hired me. When the Kuns went on vacation she retaliated against me. She started giving a bad schedule cut my hours and did not put in in the position I was hired for. She prevented me from talking to to the Kuns. I ended up giving a proper two week notice and moving on to another job where I spent five. In 2014 I went back to Grace Homes and got my home certified for Foster Care. Mrs. Kuns was not even aware of why I left in 2003. I decertified my home in September 2015 after my last kid turned 18. Actually the records my decrestifcation until November. By this time the Kuns where out of place and when this happened I was not rembursed as per the contract for my child. Since the kids mean more to me I couldn't push the issue to hard without risking my foster child being displaced so I waited and terminated my dealing with Gracehomes after my foster child turned 18 and was out of my home. I never had any issues with payment or training while the Kuns where in place. Sherry is honest and highly educated and capable of dealing with the children that we served. In fact never stopped educating herself over the years and passing it on to staff. Any staff who worked there knows that we where working with a high risk population and it wasn't the safest job. The risk was part of the job and we where trained to handle it. The Kuns are the farthest from curropt that you can get. The only thing they are guilty of is hiring people who wanted what they had. The problems when I was there where ones caused by people that they hired and put into supervisor positions.They where a little to trusting that those supervisors would all properly do their jobs. They had a vision to help pregnant teens and they did that. It is really wrong how people are throwing dirt on them now. The board member who won't identify himself deflects Sherries compliant by saying the Kuns mis handled money. What do they have to say about the mishandling of money after they where out of place? I know the Kuns founded the Grace Homes but they are also hired a lot of people who took a role in running it. So let's not forget that. The Kuns had a good vision and are still stand up people in my eyes!"

— *Jen*

"I lived at Grace homes for over a year with my child. It was really bad for us. The kuns made us feel like we were in juvenile hall. We could not go outside or even go to stores. We had to stay inside and clean all day saturday. We had to wash vans and do yard work. We could only watch cartoons and we had to be in bed at 8 oclock. I was so glad when I left grace homes. I would have to ask over and over to get items for my baby and never got them. I could never talk to the kuns only rosemary who would forget everything and was always to busy to help me. When I left grace homes had new supervisors and new office staff who changed grace homes and made it better. I wished that they would have made the changes sooner. It's good that the new girls at Grace homes will have a better experience then I did."

— *Former Resident*

Comments & Letters

Public Comment Question Follow Up, Real Life, Daily Volunteerism

So, I presented my stack of papers 5 inches high of maps completed this past year, 2015, on Cleaning up north Visalia.

Here is a 2 hour window into what it looks like to "put Humpty back together again." Remember this goes on daily, hourly, virtually minute by minute. I could be wrong, but most of this disorder, is not city staff jurisdictional stuff, it's neighborhood issues, which left unaddressed will subtlety and gradually destroy and erode the livability of our community. You can't call someone to fix it, it's not their job, and even if you could, the response would not be immediate enough!

I got up today at approx. 3am, raining.

Why? It's divided container trash pick up day, I live around an immense number of rentals, apts, houses, alleys. I am in the heart, the core of the city, the north side, the vaunted and storied Oval area.

I have an ongoing, ever changing list of who gets their trash out and who could care less. The trick is to not enable them by putting out their trash for them every week, but getting trash removed every week from the hood and not having it pile up. This is a very exact battle, timing is everything. Trash trucks can start as early as 4am and once they go by for your weekly pickup, it's too late, wait till next week.

I check who's trash container is out, who forgot. Time is ticking. Meanwhile, while on this mission, I observe a business with sprinklers going in the rain. Note that. I also observe a camper spending the night in a city park, note. I come across a divided container toppled over with trash, exploded all over the street. To my luck, I see someone up on the property, call out to them, over the chorus of a troop of dogs barking, "hey, did you know your container is all over the street?," he states, "No." I offer to clean it up with him, it's 3am. We stand it back up, holding the lids, so we don't have a bigger mess. He says, Thanks, and he says he will clean up the street. New relationship! Less Mean!

I move on, one apt., under remodel, no divided containers are out, note. Another location, new Friends of mine, did not get theirs out, noted. I checked on house north of Houston, yes, they got theirs out but about eight trash bags all over street. Noted. I follow up on huge pile of trash left on a friends property. Noted.

I check on a friends trash container, bags all around it, noted.

Storm drain, full of leaves, cleared.

I come across, completely random, because it was not there after I returned home from speaking at CAC last night, a full shopping cart, laden with trash, half in the cart, half on the street. Because I am armed with huge buckets, rake, and gloves, I clean up the mess, before the occupant who's house it was left in front of, wakes up and probably remarks, "What the .....?" I am on alert for possible needles and other unsavory stuff like human excrement while cleaning up this pile of people's trash. I call these "push off shopping carts." They regularly happen and are attempts by persons to clean up their own are at the expense of the hood.

I note a newly placed Xmas tree outside a house, can't remove to city container due to Xmas tree removal program ended yesterday. Will attempt to approach, offer to cut in half, or remove and make a possible new relationship.

Type this email, and it goes on and on.... Now 5am.

Humpty back on wall, now for a one hour walk around the Oval because you see a lot more on foot than you do in a car.

Bill Huott
Clean is less Mean....

Reader: 'A Couple of Quislings'

So, JOSEPH OldenBourg and CATherine DOE Think Donald J. Trump is BAD FOR America. Both of you Quislings mentioned kids and grandkids. MAY I Remind Both oF you white FOLKs, That America owes Foreignriers 19 TRillion DOLLARs AND By The time BARRY From HonoLuLu, The Thin Man, will leave US in A 21 to 24 TRillion HOLE! who will pAy The Freigniers the 21 to 24 TRillion dollars wise ones??

I look at my 8 graNdKids, The youngest is 3 years old ANd Realizeher share Alone is over 1 million dollARS! By The time They get Retirement Age, There will Be NOThing FOR Them. So much FOR The Democrat SOLUtion. I must Remind you white FOLKs That you are The "minoRities" iN CALIFORNIA, it just has'nt connected in your Mind. We Americans Need more pooR FOLKs like The white FOLKs iN EURope! I Know, I Know, you were told By TeachERs That Foreigns is good and RepUBLICANS BAd. PersonALLy The Foreignrers are wAy smarter Than The College Educated "sMARt" Americans. They get TAXpAyeR monies, Free medical, VISion, dentAL, Food STAmps EBT CARds, TAXPAYeR Free Housing, OBAMA Phosnes ANd only God KNOWs what Else The Mexican POLSTiCIANS ANd Quisling white ones dream up. DID I mention THEY DON'T PAY TAXES! OH, I Know your Teachers ToLd you, They pay Billions, each year. I Know The Mexicans, my RAZA, Send Mexico Lindo over 30 Billion American DoLLARS A year. I don'T use computers, But, Google CALIFORNIA TAX dollARS to Social Services CALIFORNIA! Better yet, look at your PAY STUB OR TAX Forms. Yeah, The DemocrAts ARe Soooo smArt. DoNALd J. Trump, A BillionAiRe is BAd? I"LL TAKe A BillionAiRe over A DEMONCRAT ANY DAY.

John Sanchez
Hanford

[Ed.: This was a handwritten note and accurately transcribed to demonstrate the spirit of the correspondence.]

Reader: "Our Elitist Professor of Education Is Mentally Ill"

On your Jan. 7 Viewpoint page I really take issue snarky, devious and outright dishonest writing of Dr. David Ragland. NO, America is not mentally our elitist professor of education is. NO! The narrative about terrorism doesn't simply change because "of color"; it fits a profile. The exact profile ignored in the San Bernadino case. Is absolutely not because of any "NRA position". Then his falsehoods move on to declare black on black crime is nothing more than "the myth of black criminality".

His origin for all the class violence is to those "slave-owning colonists". Sorry to break this, things go back a lot further, like maybe the Garden of Eden. The colonists broke away and established a system that eventually ended slavery. Slavery wasn't their creation! Let things move on, you race-baters! That is "radical truth telling". One need only go back to the 60's and 70's and the progressive "love the one your with". I recently read the most disturbing example ever. Our affordable housing projects are no longer filled with families, they are filled with single mothers. That damn NRA and conservatives. Yea, progressive intellectuals.

Stephen Crigler

"Jerry and Wes have NEVER had an issue terminating any officer in the past. They DO NOT live by they're own rules. Carlton. Do some digging. There are many many officers who are fed up with the PD administration and they're "do as I say, not as I do" attitude. Tulare NEEDS a Chief who is not a Tulare good old boy (Wes Hensley). Hire a good honest Chief who will insure that he lives a clean honest life and sets a pure example for his people. You can't make people forget what they have seen these people do. Good Luck Carlton your gonna need it with this group.

Carlton. DO YOUR JOB. You are in a position of power placed there by the citizens. Quit blowing smoke. There are things you can do. YOU STEP UP. Wizard"

— ***Fred Johnson** on **Sources Explain Tulare Chief Breckinridge's Absence***

Veteran's Corner

Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program

Joe Wright

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) Program is sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program. The program assists veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, the program offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible.

Services that may be provided by the VR&E Program include comprehensive rehabilitation evaluation, vocational counseling and rehabilitation planning, job-training, job-seeking skills, resume development, assistance finding and keeping a job including the use of special employer incentives and job accommodations, post-secondary training at a college, vocational, technical or business school, and independent living services for veterans unable to work due to the severity of their disabilities.

Active Duty service members are eligible if they expect to receive an honorable discharge upon separation from active duty. Veterans are eligible if they have received, or will receive, a discharge that is other than dishonorable, and have a service-connected disability rating of at least 10%, or a memorandum rating of 20% or more from the VA. Active Duty and veterans must apply for this benefit.

The basic period of eligibility in which VR&E services may be used is 12 years from the date of separation from active military service, or the date the veteran was first notified by VA of a service-connected disability rating. The basic period of eligibility may be extended if a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor determines that a veteran has a serious employment handicap.

The Kings County Veterans Service Office can complete the DMV Veteran Status Verification Form for the new California Veteran Designation on your driver's license.

We can also issue Veteran ID cards to honorably discharged veterans. Contact Joe Wright if you would like to receive periodic veteran's information by email. There are many state and federal benefits and programs available to veterans and their dependents.

To find out if you are eligible for any of these benefits, visit or call our office. We can and will assist you in completing all required application forms. You can get information on the Web from the Kings County Veterans Service Office webpage at www.countyofkings.com/vets.

Joe Wright, retired Navy Master Chief Petty Officer, is the Veterans Service Officer for Kings County. Send your questions to the Veterans Service Office, 1400 W. Lacey Blvd, Hanford, CA 93230; call (559)852-2669; or e-mail joe.wright@co.kings.ca.us.

Ishida

Continued from p. 12

And it should be up to the local officials--city and county governments, he said.

With regard to healthcare, Ishida said, "Covered California is going to bury us, financially.

"I would want to amend it, although, just how, I am not sure," he admits.

If the state had more economic development, it would have more taxpayers, he said. There would be more paying in, rather than current taxpayers paying more. Thus, taxpayers could retain more of their income.

"We need more people working," he said. "Healthcare providers need to get fair compensation for their services," he added, "or else there won't be enough caretakers for all of us.

"When I was growing up we didn't have health insurance--we paid to see the doctor. Until you're in your '50s you really don't need it, you just need catastrophic coverage."

That is unless you were born with health issues, he added.

Making the Run

There are two years and nine months before the election that could make Ishida governor and he will not fully start his campaign until his current term as supervisor is complete. Then he will start avidly fundraising.

"I am probably one of the few Republican candidates in the recent past (to run), who is not filthy rich," he said, admitting that he cannot self-fund his campaign.

"I am definitely not part of the establishment and I will get resistance.

"I look at myself as the person to get the job done--to address water and financial issues. I believe in being upfront and honest. And I am tired of seeing the state kick the can down the road and not solving any problems.

I can be nonpartisan--I've dealt as a nonpartisan for 11 years and I feel, as governor, I would take the same approach--and that's, I've got to be tough."

Ishida does say that he really never has had political ambitions and this has nothing to do with ego.

"I feel you have certain things in life--this is something I need to do," he said. "If there was someone else who would do what I want to do, I wouldn't run."

On a Personal Note

Allen Ishida is 67 years old. If he were elected to Governor in 2018, he would be nearing 70 by the time he took office. However, longevity does run in his family. His father, 92, still helps run the family farming business, as Ishida has stepped aside during his time in office.

Ishida and his wife, Wanda, live outside of Lindsay. They have three grown children. All are surprised by his intention to run for governor, but are supportive.

Ishida enjoys hunting, sport clay shooting, camping and occasional freshwater fishing. He and his wife enjoy traveling around the state and the country. He has been a member of Exeter and Porterville Eagles Lodges. Most of all Ishida likes to farm.

"I enjoy farming," he said. "There is an immediate gratification from getting tasks done.

You're your own boss--you are an independent businessman" he said.

But mostly, "Farming is memory relaxing."

Woodlake High FFA Winter Retreat

Kiara Benavides

On January 7, Woodlake FFA's Chapter and Greenhand (Freshmen) officer teams kicked off the new semester and restarted their gears with a winter leadership retreat to Sequoia National Park. The retreat gave the two teams an opportunity to connect and bond with each other while participating in different activities such as a snowshoe hike adventure.

Snowshoeing gave new experiences to all the officers and advisors which proved both fun and challenging. The challenges that were met with this activity helped the officers become closer amongst each other and helped them step out of their comfort zones to become better individual leaders.

Whether it was speaking up about a possible sketchy situation or helping a teammate out when they fell behind and couldn't get up, each officer took lessons on leadership away from this retreat including fun filled memories that were surely made, as well as lessons that they can hold onto and apply to their future endeavors.

As stated by the chapter's current sentinel, Pia Martinez, "I learned that we (as a team) are all in this together and as a group we can solve any challenge thrown at us. I had a blast creating new memories with both of the Woodlake FFA officer teams. They are the only people I would want to snowshoe with for three-and-a-half hours then still laugh with excitement and energy on the way home!"

All in all, Woodlake FFA's officers moved mountains in their leadership abilities and spent time making many memories. Woodlake FFA is gearing up for a fun and busy semester filled with leadership competitions, career development events, fundraising, and continuing to prepare our members for successful futures.

Kiara Benavides is currently serving as Woodlake High School's FFA Chapter's Reporter.

Valley Voice
Valley Scene
21 January, 2016

Avenue Q to Open at Lindsay Community Theater on January 29

Jim Kliegl

Avenue Q opens at the Lindsay Community Theater, Friday, January 29. Winner of the TONY® "TRIPLE CROWN" for Best Musical, Best Score and Best Book, Avenue Q is part flesh, part felt and packed with heart.

Avenue Q is a laugh-out-loud musical set on the somewhat seedy neighborhood of Avenue Q, New York.

Adults love Avenue Q, but they seem a little fuzzy on whether it's appropriate for kids. Avenue Q is great for teenagers because it's about real life. It may not be appropriate for young children because Avenue Q addresses issues like sex, drinking and surfing the web for porn. It's hard to say what exact age is right to see Avenue Q--parents should use their discretion based on the maturity level of their children. But, show promoters say, if you do bring your teenagers to Avenue Q, they'll think you're really cool.

Avenue Q tells the story of recent college graduatepuppet Princeton (Tyler Jarrett), looking for two things: his life's purpose and an affordable apartment in New York City. He soon meets a motley but friendly assortment of neighbors, including puppet Kate Monster (Lesley Harrison), human Brian (Andrew Phipps), Brian's Japanese-American fiancé human Christmas Eve (Victoria Loeffler), and bickering roommate puppets Nicky (Colleen Fleming) and puppet Rod (Chris Shepard).

The superintendent of the building is none other than former child TV star human Gary Coleman (Jaymee Canas). Princeton rents an apartment and is welcomed to the neighborhood, and the stirrings of romance begin between Princeton and Kate Monster. After losing his job, Princeton is approached by the puppet Bad Idea Bears (Alli Smith and Pedro Nava), two adorable, snuggly bears who convince him to spend his rapidly dwindling funds on a case of beer. Bad idea!

In her apartment, Kate receives a phone call from her unpleasant boss, Mrs. Thistletwat (Jip Woudstra), informing Kate that she will have to take over the morning kindergarten class. She decides to teach them about the internet. Princeton brings Kate a mix tape, confirming his romantic interest in her, and asks her to go with him on a date to the Around the Clock Café.

Will Princeton get lucky with Kate? Will the Bad Idea Bears give Princeton and the others even more bad ideas? Will Princeton find the meaning of life on Avenue Q? These and many other questions are answered as the play unfolds.

The cast of Avenue Q rehearsing. Courtesy/Lindsay Community Theater

Avenue Q is directed by Chris Shepard, assisted by Shane Rangel. Linda Jarrett is the choreographer and Colleen Fleming is the costumer. Judy Fleming is the stage manager, Kami Whitten is the musical director, Russel "Bones" Fletcher is the lighting technician, and Jeremy Waterman is the sound technician.

Show dates are Friday, January 29 at 7:30pm and midnight, Saturday, January 30 at 7:30pm, Friday, February 5 at midnight, Saturday, February 6 at 2pm (special PG-13 version), and at 7:30pm. Tickets are $15 for adults and $10 for students. Reserve your seats by ordering tickets at lindsaycommunitytheater.com.

The Sole 2 Soul running group. Courtesy/Jess Salgado

Sole 2 Soul Offers Runners and Walkers Training Assistance

Nancy Vigran

An early morning light rain did not discourage a new group of runners from partaking in their first training session at Plaza Park, Saturday. Encouraging those who have not tried running as a form of exercise before, or providing help to those re-entering the sport, Sole 2 Soul Sports organizes training sessions for new or returning runners.

The eight-week team-in-training course started last Saturday; however, those interested still may join up until the third week of class.

It started last year, and is growing this year, said Jess Salgado, a trainer with the group.

Ages range from 10 to early 50s, and there is no age limitation.

Aubrey Brown, 10, is the youngest, but she is not the only youth in the group.

"I wanted to exercise a little bit more, and I wanted to stay healthy," Brown said.

"It was really fun," she said of her first day of training. "There was a girl two years older than me, so I had someone to run and walk with."

Brown also added that she plays soccer, and wants to strengthen her legs and be able to run a little faster.

The point is to not necessarily to push oneself, Salgado said, but to exercise and have fun.

Salgado, 47, has been a runner for a little more than five years.

"I started because of my father, Tommy, after he was diagnosed with

RUNNERS continued on **23 »**

The Donkeys to Play at Cellar Door in Visalia on January 30

California places a distinct sonic stamp upon the music born within its boundaries. Owens had his Bakersfield, Parsons his Joshua Tree, and Malkmus his Stockton, and in their tunes you can hear dust, desert highways, and skateboards gliding over suburbia.

The Donkeys have San Diego, and from that environment have woven a fundamental ease in their music – a rock, a roll, a sway, a slide – you could even call it a breeze.

The Donkeys

On 2014's *Ride the Black Wave*, The Donkeys continued their easy rolling, classic vibrations, but add a mystery and tension that make this record their most lyrically and instrumentally compelling.

Recorded at San Diego's Singing Serpent and mixed by LA's Thom Monahan, the Telecasters have a golden shimmer, the drums seem to echo with a regional reverberation.

The notes coming off the Rhodes float on like beer-buzzed afternoons, but just when you get lost in the hypnotic swirl of "Sunny Daze" the churning guitars begin to circle like sharks, reminding us of the realities beneath all beautiful surfaces. Ten tracks deep, Adrianne Verhoeven of San Francisco's Extra Classic appears like the mythic Calafia herself, delivering a vocal that would bring Cortez to his knees.

But now the San Diego four-piece has recently announced the release of their upcoming mini-album *Midnight Palms* (February 12).

On January 28, they will be setting off on tour, performing at Visalia's Cellar Door on January 30.

Tracked largely live-in-the-studio with veteran producer, longtime friend, and fellow traveler Thom Monahan (Vetiver, Fruit Bats, Devendra Banhart), *Midnight Palms* was recorded at the end of one of the bands blitzkrieg road runs (which might see the band playing as many as 28 shows in 29 days). The collection's lived-in live feel should surprise few.

The core founding trio of Tim Denardo, Anthony Lukens, and Sam Sprague drive the proceedings.

The fourth Donkey on Midnight Palms is The Hold Steady's Steve Selvidge, stepping in after the (amiable) departure of long-time guitarist Jesse Gulati. Selvidge hopped on stage with the Donkeys during a show in Texas, and would end up joining the band for a fair number of shows. His pointed, tasteful leads are peppered throughout *Midnight Palms*.

A Taste of Yesteryear in Downtown Springville

Jan M. Krafve

Cowpunchers Café and Catering Company is tucked into the foothills of the Sierras in the heart of downtown Springville. Located on Highway 190, it is easy to see since the speed limit is only 30 mph. Just look for the western-style awning and wooden fencing that highlight the country front porch dining of the café.

Mortimer Moose greets all visitors as they walk in the door. Decorated inside like a rustic cabin, it has that cowgirl touch. The walls are covered with a collection of original farm labels, branding irons, clever sayings and all sorts of cowboy memorabilia. It's a place right out of the heartland of America's past.

Julie Ladrigan, sole owner and cook (or chef) sits at the counter of her restaurant, having just closed her business for the day. Preparing a grocery list for an upcoming fundraising dinner, she said, "Remember what it was like back when we were kids? Life seemed like it was a little less hectic. It moved at a slower pace."

It was a time when it generally took longer to do the same things we do today. Cars weren't quite as fast. Public telephones were at every convenience store and at gas stations. Back then, they were actually two different businesses. This was before the dawn of fast-food fanaticism and the ever-increasing population of specialty restaurant chains. In San Francisco or Seattle, Porterville or Pittsburgh, a customer can eat at any franchise restaurant and expect to order from the same menu, knowing it will taste exactly the same.

"I owned another café in Terre Bella," Ladrigan explained. "When I sold it, I went to work as a cook for a couple of weeks at another restaurant. I was so excited that someone else was going to pay me to do what love to do, cooking what I love to eat. Wrong. Today's restaurant kitchens are full of line cooks, preparing industry-made entrées, appetizers and desserts. There was no room for my uniqueness and creativity."

She takes great pride in running her place just like restaurants were run when she was growing up. There is even a personal note on her menu for customers that reads, "All of our food is made fresh to order, so please be patient. I promise you, it will be worth the wait."

Open seven days a week for breakfast and lunch, Ladrigan spends most of her time in the kitchen. A vast menu offers many of her "Cowgirl Cookin'" specialties. Each burger is made with freshly ground beef and hand-pressed to order. Also offered is her famous "scared beef," (another name for chicken fried steak, hand-breaded, and smothered in gravy) available for breakfast or served with a bun at lunch.

Country biscuits and steaming gravy are available along with a large selection of three-egg omelets. The most requested omelet is called. "The Kitchen Sink." The menu description reads, "If it's in the kitchen, it's in the omelet."

On the lighter side, there is a hamburger steak with cottage cheese for breakfast or the same at lunch with a green salad. "The Hot Springs," features a grilled chicken breast topped with sweet Ortega chilies, bacon and Swiss cheese, served on grilled sourdough bread with ranch dressing. Ladirgan has her own special whistle berries, aka, beans, available in a bowl with garlic bread for $5.

Cowpunchers Café and Catering Company is in Springville. Jan M. Krafve/Valley Voice

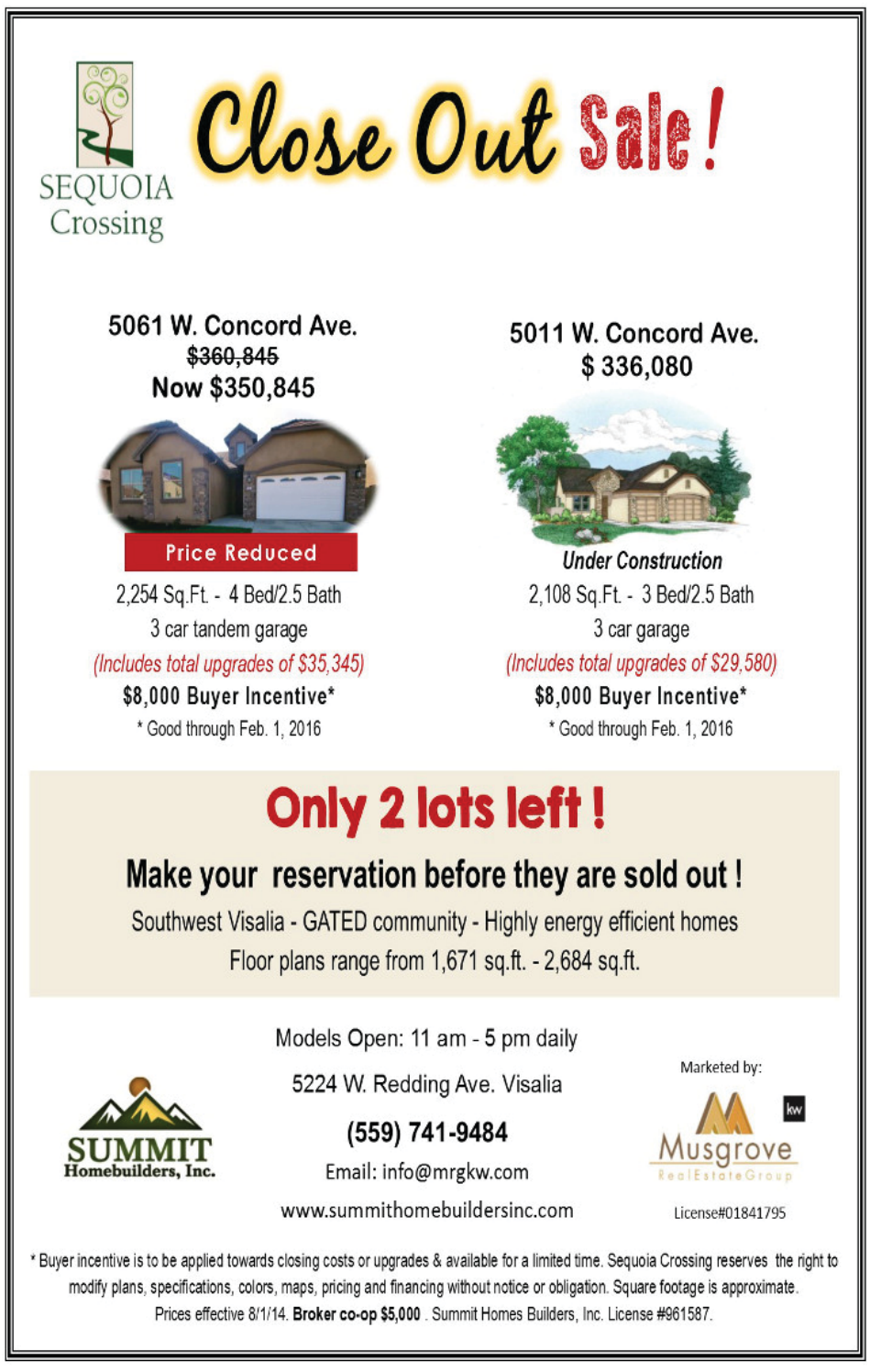
On Fridays, she serves her famous New England style clam chowder in a cup, bowl or a sourdough bowl. Also featured is hand-breaded, fish and chips. She tells people to come early because it sometimes will sell out early in the day.

"We have a special Little Buckeroo menu," Ladrigan said. "I have so much fun making the Mickey and Minnie Mouse pancakes for the kids, and then watching their faces when the plate is set before them."

In a world in which texting the restaurant from your car with a dinner order has become the ordinary, Cowpunchers Café and Catering Company tries to be the extraordinary. It is a place to spend a relaxing, leisurely moment and enjoy the kind of meal Mom or Grandma made, even though you're dining out.

"I love to cook," Ladrigan said. "My favorite thing is watching the dishes come back clean before they're even washed. That means I have a satisfied customer."

Ladrigan will be catering the food at an upcoming fundraiser on Saturday, February 13. She will be teaming up with the Springville Rotary to host a traditional Basque dinner at the Springville Veteran's Memorial Building. This event is open to the public and there will be two seating times, 5:30 and 7:30pm. For information and reservations, call (559) 539-5345.



Education

WEST HILLS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT

West Hills Will Expand Technology, Making College Easier for Students

Staff Reports

With the start of a new semester, educational leaders at West Hills College are renewing and expanding their focus on providing students with more opportunities to take classes, whether online or on campus, and on making it easier for students to navigate the college-going process.

Chancellor Frank Gornick shared with members of the West Hills Community College District Board of Trustees on Wednesday some highlights from his recent State of the District address delivered to college faculty and staff.

He said the college was embracing a variety of educational pathways such as career technical education, online degrees and concurrent enrollment.

"There are many individuals in our area who are underemployed or under-skilled," he said. "We see a strong need to provide training for skills employers want."

Gornick highlighted some of the district's goals going forward:

- WHC will help students overcome transportation issues by partnering with the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency to offer a new route to North District Center in Firebaugh from surrounding communities along with a second route from Huron to West Hills College Coalinga. Plans are in the works for a new transportation option from Avenal to West Hills College Coalinga, which should start soon.
- There will be a continued focus on online educational resources and reducing the costs of textbooks for students.
- Courses designed for adult learners as well as concurrent enrollment for area high school students will be supported.
- The district will continue to grow its online programs, including an emphasis on online degrees.

There is a new focus on adult learners and making a return to college less complicated and restrictive than it is perceived to be.

Academic Calendar Review: "Right now we offer an 18-week semester, which can be a gauntlet we ask students to run." Gornick said. The college will be looking at options such as more 9-week courses and additional accelerated programs.

"This year, an emphasis will be placed on putting more and better information in the hands of our current and prospective students," the chancellor said. "Our unique year-round registration process that we developed last year will continue to be fine-tuned. We'll revise and simplify forms and instructions for web based application and enrollment options. And we want to streamline orientation to emphasize what new students need to know right now.

"We take a lot of things for granted with respect to our student population," he said. "Sometimes our posted instructions to students assume they understand our process better than they in fact do. To that end, we are issuing an RFP for a whole new website to upgrade our web page. This would include an upgrade to make a new website that is totally mobile so students can access all the information they need, online, from wherever they are."

Gornick also highlighted the importance of the associate degree for transfer program, a unique program that provides California community college students with guaranteed admission to a California State University. This past year the number of these degrees awarded district-wide has doubled, mirroring a state-wide increase.

"The popularity of the associate degree for transfer is creating the pathway the master plan always wanted to create," he said. "It's a real plus for us and our students."

COS Training Resource Center Offers Marketing Through Social Media Class

The COS Training Resource Center is offering a new Marketing Through Social Media class. The course series starts Thursday, January 28, meets February 11 and ends February 25, 2016 at the Tulare College Center from 5:30-7:30pm.

This class will be held in three sessions, two hours each and costs $99/person.

There is one week between each class in order to give the student enough time to complete some minor assignments such as building "Likes" and "Followers" on their pages.

The course is designed to allow you to see results on your social media pages by the end of the class.

The Training Resource Center's goal is to provide valuable training to Tulare and Kings county businesses, which propelled them to offer this class. The class will cover how to setup social media accounts, choosing account names, best practices, content marketing principles, analytics and more.

This class is designed to provide a foundation for the use of social media as a marketing tool in a business environment, including small business.

It will cover Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram and will touch on Google+, YouTube, Pinterest and other common social media platforms.

For more information on the class, visit www.cos.edu/trainingcenter. To register for the class, call 559.688.3130.

Warkentin Named President Emeritus by WHCCD Board of Trustees

In light of his 29 years of service to West Hills College and a 42-year career in education, the West Hills Community College District Board of Trustees recently presented former West Hills College Lemoore President Don Warkentin with the honorary title of President Emeritus.

Don Warkentin

Warkentin retired as President of WHCL, a position he has held since 2004, in December. The recommendation to give Warkentin the title was made to the board by his longtime friend and colleague, WHCCD Chancellor Dr. Frank Gornick, and was unanimously approved by the board.

"Mr. Don Warkentin served the West Hills Community College District with distinction for nearly 30 years," said Gornick. "His provision of good and faithful service to the students, employees, and communities has earned him the respect, admiration, and accolades deserving of a status as President Emeritus. In recognition of exceptional service and continuing contributions to the District and its colleges, it is with pride and honor that I request the Board of Trustees grant this status – President Emeritus – to Mr. Don Warkentin."

Warkentin began his career in education in 1973 as a biology teacher for Lemoore High School, where he also served as a football coach, baseball coach, athletic director and principal of the continuation school. In 1986, he began his work at West Hills College as Associate Dean of what was then the WHC Kings County Center.

Under his guidance, WHCL became its own campus in 2002. He also oversaw a variety of expansion projects, including the building of the Golden Eagle Arena and a new student center. With his leadership, the college has grown from 700 students in portable buildings to over 3,000 students on a brand new campus.

He has also been active in the Lemoore community as a member of the Lemoore Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and Kiwanis Club as well as the Kings County Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors. Warkentin is a former US Army officer who served in Vietnam.

"The Great Conversation" at College of the Sequoias

Joseph R. Teller

College of the Sequoias' "Great Conversation" discussion group is being organized to read and discuss some of the great classics of literature and philosophy published by the Great Books Foundation. The readings include excerpts or complete works by writers such as Tillie Olsen, Alice Munro, Rene Descartes, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Herman Melville, and Max Planck. The fall semester reading group will begin Monday, January 25, 2016. The group will meet every second and fourthMonday afternoon of the month from 4:00-5:30 PM on the COS main campus. The book costs $24.95 through the Great Books Foundation. Contact Dr.Joseph Teller at josepht@cos.edu or at (559) 730-3924 for further information about the meeting location, the book purchase, and the first reading under discussion.

Open to all readers interested in great books, Great Conversation discussion groups are not lecture-based, butinsteadusea process of "shared inquiry." While each discussion is led by an experienced seminar leader, discussions begin with open-ended, interpretive questions, and participants put forward their own interpretations, developing their views through the sharing of their ideas with others.

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Calendar

Mondays: Bridge Club, 9:30am-2pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Admission is free. For additional information call: Joan Dinwiddie @ 732-0855

Mondays: Knitters, 10am-12:30pm
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. Everyone is welcome.

Fridays: Women's Morning Bible Study, 9am-Noon
210 W Center Street Visalia, CA 93291. For additional information call: 739-9010

2nd Tuesday, Monthly: Yappy Hour, 5-9pm
Well-mannered, leashed pets are welcome on the patio at the Planing Mill Artisan Pizzeria, 514 East Main Street, Suite A, in Visalia. A portion of the proceeds is donated to the Valley Oak SPCA. For more information, call 651-1111.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Gathering At the Oval, 12:30-1pm
Lifting up the needs and concerns of Visalia through individual prayer and meditation at Oval Park, 808 North Court Street in Visalia. For more information, call 967-4065.

3rd Thursday, Monthly: Board Game Night, 6-7:45pm
For ages 10+ at the Visalia Branch Library, 200 West Oak Street. Sign-ups are not required. For more information, call 713-2703.

1st and 3rd Thursdays: Central Valley Tea Party Meetings, 6pm
819 West Visalia Road, Farmersville.

If you would like to learn how to better manage your health, sign up for a free six-week workshop presented by Kaweah Delta Health Care District. The workshop is designed to help people with ongoing health problems such as diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, asthma, or any other chronic condition. Class size is typically around 12-18 participants. Each session lasts 2 ½ hours. Topics that are covered include: dealing with difficult emotions, managing symptoms, goal setting, problem solving, nutrition, understanding medications, making informed treatment decisions, and increasing strength and stamina through better fitness.
This workshop was developed by Dr. Kate Lorig at Stanford University. Participants demonstrate significant improvements in the areas covered. They also report fewer hospitalizations and outpatient visits. The Empowerment for Better Living CDSMP workshops will be offered on a quarterly basis at the newly opened Chronic Disease Management Center located at 325 Willis Street in Visalia. Available session dates are as followed:
February 10th – March 16th (Every Wednesday for 6 weeks 10am-12:30pm)
April 5th – May 10th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am -12:30pm)
July 12th – August 16th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)
October 4th – November 8th (Every Tuesday for 6 weeks 10am – 12:30pm)

JANUARY

January 21: Veterans Aid and Attendance Workshop, 6-7:30pm
At Quail Park Retirement Village. Veterans can earn up to $25,022 of tax-free income per year to pay for assistance with activities of daily living. Find out more by attending this free event. Guest speaker is Gilbert Fleming, Elder Law Attorney. For additional information or to RSVP, call 624-3503. Quail Park is located at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

January 21: Dwight Yoakam, 7:30pm
At the Visalia Fox Theatre. $49-$75 + service fees. VIP Experience is $175 (includes premier ticket) + service fees. **VIP Experience! —** Each package includes the following: One (1) ticket to the show; One (1) signed item - provided by artist, no personal items please, Meet & Greet photo - photographer provided, no personal cameras please; Two (2) Dwight Yoakam signature guitar picks.

January 22: Veteran and Senior's breakfast, 7:30am-9am
At Lemoore Veterans Memorial Building, 411 West D St. in Lemoore. Attendance is free. For more information call the American Legion at 924-3907.

January 22: Tulare Chamber of Commerce 132nd Annual Awards Banquet, 6-9pm
Honoring the 2015 award recipients: Man of the Year, Ken Nunes; Woman of the Year, Nancy Gregg; Small Business of the Year, California Turf Equipment & Supply; Large Business of the Year, Amdal In Home Care; Ambassador of the Year, Sharon Allison-Crook. Special Guest Speaker: Congressman Devin Nunes - 22nd District of California. At the Heritage Complex at the International Agri-Center, 4500 South Laspina Street, in Tulare. Tickets are $60.

January 22: 58th annual Installation & Awards Banquet, 6pm
Join the Lemoore Chamber of Commerce, in the Blue Oak conference room at the Tachi Palace, 17225 Jersey Avenue in Lemoore, as they honor the recipients of 2016 citizen, business and organization of the year. Tickets, $65, are not available at the door. Reservation deadline is January 15. For more information call the Lemoore Chamber of Commerce at 924-6401.

January 23: Tule Fog Run, 7am
Run/walk along the St. John's River trail beginning at Cutler Park, 15520 Ivanhoe Drive in Visalia. Check-in at 7am, with the Kids' Fun Run starting at 7:45am and the race beginning at 8am.Registration is $25 for the for the 5k Walk/Run, $25 for the 10k Run, and $15 for the Kids' Fun Run. Fees will rise by $10 after January 14. For more information call the Visalia Parks & Recreation Department at 713-4365.

January 23: Run for Education Fundraiser, 7:30am
Come out to West Hills College Lemoore, 555 College Avenue in Lemoore, and run for education, the event will benefit several WHCL programs, including the HOPE initiative, which drives pre-college initiatives including the annual Eagle Dayz event; Team Teach, the WHCL teacher development program; and scholarships for the 5c Experience summer program, which allows middle school students to explore math and science. All participants will get a free pancake breakfast and pair of neon socks. The event will also feature a bit of fun, with a team lip sync battle contest and a funky sock competition. Cost is $25 students with a valid ID card, $35 non-students, $40 day of event.

January 23: Happy Trails Riding Academy Volunteer Orientation, 8am-Noon
The orientation will take place at Happy Trails Riding Academy's facility located at 2773 East Oakdale Ave. (Ave. 256) in Tulare. Volunteer roles, demonstrations, safety rules, and the 2016 class schedule will be discussed. All volunteers must be at least 14 years old and physically fit enough to walk for up to two hours, including occasional jogging. Happy Trails Riding Academy is a non-profit program that enriches the lives of children and adults with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities through therapeutic horsemanship, providing a unique opportunity for self-improvement and independence while offering a challenging alternative to traditional therapy. If you are interested in volunteering and making a difference in the lives of the students at Happy Trails, please contact them at (559)688-8685 or info@weare-happytrails.com to RSVP for the orientation.

January 23: Sequoia National Park Job Fair, 9am-4pm
At the Visalia Convention Center, 303 E. Acequia Avenue, be prepared to interview for jobs (most of which are summer-seasonal). Positions are varied and available from multiple employers. www.sequoiaparksconservancy.org.

January 23: Veterans Aid and Attendance Workshop, 10-11:30am
At Quail Park Retirement Village. Veterans can earn up to $25,022 of tax-free income per year to pay for assistance with activities of daily living. Find out more by attending this free event. Guest speaker is Gilbert Fleming, Elder Law Attorney. For additional information or to RSVP, call 624-3503. Quail Park is located at 4520 W. Cypress Ave., Visalia.

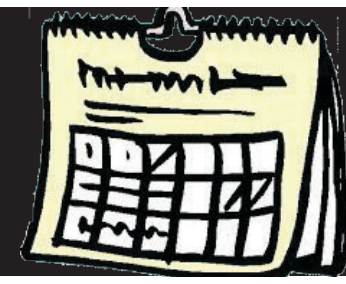
January 23: Lindsay Chamber Awards Dinner, 5:30pm
The annual awards dinner was established to recognize significant contributions made by the Lindsay community members and businesses. Awards will be presented to individuals who have exemplified the spirit of Lindsay. The awards dinner will take place at McDermont Field House and Sports Center in Lindsay. For more information, call 562-4929.

January 23: Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto No. 1", 7:30pm
The Tulare County Symphony opens its 2016 concerts with Rachmaninoff's "Piano Concerto No. 1" on Saturday, Jan. 23 at 7:30pm at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets are $30 to $39.50 at the symphony office, 208 W. Main Street, Suite D, Visalia, downstairs in Montgomery Square. Student prices are $10. Tickets are also available at 732-8600 or go to www.tularecountysymphony.com. The concert begins at 7:30pm, but the audience is invited to attend the pre-concert preview by music director Bruce Kiesling at 6:45pm.

January 25: An Afternoon At the Movies, 1pm
In the Assembly Room at St. Anthony Retreat Center in Three Rivers, a showing of the film *Music of the Heart,* starring Meryl Streep and Cloris Leachman. Sponsored by Aging in Community-Three Rivers. Refreshments. Rides provided for those without transportation (call 465-4666 or 561-4703). Free; open to the public.

January 25: Square Eights Hall dance lessons, 7pm
Learn to square dance at Square Eights Hall, 11555 Fargo Avenue in Hanford. If this is your first time round the floor its free. The first class is free. Couples and singles age 8 to 99 years are welcome to join. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Meet new friends. Refreshments provided. Cost is $4 for adults and $2 for teens. For any questions call 582-1640 and leave message.

January 27: Career and Resource Expo, 9am-1pm
State Senator Andy Vidak with special guest Congressman David Valadao and The Wonderful Company invite you and your business to attend a Career and Resource Expo in collaboration with the Tachi Palace on Wednesday, January 27, 2016 from 9:00am to 1:00pm at the Tachi Palace (17225 Jersey Avenue, Lemoore, CA 93245). With high unemployment in our Central Valley, connecting people looking for a job with people who have jobs to fill is one of the Senator's top priorities, That's why the Senator is hosting more than 70 local employers with immediate openings at his Job Fair. If you have any open positions that you need filled, this is a great opportunity to take. The Senator's staff will provide legislative updates, constituent services and resources. For questions, contact district office representative Claudia Salinas at 559-585-7161 or claudia.salinas@sen.ca.gov



January 27: 2016 Annual Corcoran Chamber of Commerce Banquet, 5:30pm
At the Recreation Association of Corcoran Main Building, 900 Dairy Avenue in Corcoran.
Tickets are $30 per person. Reserved seating is available for tables of 8 for $280. Doors will open at 5:15pm. Social Hour, Appetizers & Table Judging from 5:30-6:30pm. Dinner and Awards Ceremony immediately following.

January 28: Twist & Shout, 11am
A dance class for those affected by Parkinson's Disease, their partners, helpers and friends. Seated or standing motions for fun and flexibility at West Visalia Grange, 327 North Shirk Road. Pre-register with Kathy Page at katlou59@comcast.net. For more information, call 240-3200.

January 29: Veteran and Senior's breakfast, 7:30am-9am
At Lemoore Veterans Memorial Building, 411 West D St. in Lemoore. Attendance is free. For more information call the American Legion at 924-3907.

January 29: The Beach Boys, 7:30pm
At the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets $59-$99.

January 30: Anime Visalia Monthly Meeting, 10:30am-3:30pm
Anime viewing, Manga reading and gaming at the Visalia Branch Library, 200 West Oak Avenue in Visalia. Information is at facebook.com/AnimeVisalia/

January 30: Happy Trails Riding Academy Volunteer Orientation, 1-5pm
The orientation will take place at Happy Trails Riding Academy's facility located at 2773 East Oakdale Ave. (Ave. 256) in Tulare. Volunteer roles, demonstrations, safety rules, and the 2016 class schedule will be discussed. All volunteers must be at least 14 years old and physically fit enough to walk for up to two hours, including occasional jogging. Happy Trails Riding Academy is a non-profit program that enriches the lives of children and adults with physical, mental, and emotional disabilities through therapeutic horsemanship, providing a unique opportunity for self-improvement and independence while offering a challenging alternative to traditional therapy. If you are interested in volunteering and making a difference in the lives of the students at Happy Trails, please contact them at (559)688-8685 or info@weare-happytrails.com to RSVP for the orientation.

January 30: Cirque Ziva, 4 & 7:30pm
The Golden Dragon Acrobats--a company of 30--return to the Visalia Fox Theatre for two shows. Matinee tickets $9-$14. Evening show Tickets $21-$29.

January 30: Three Rivers Performing Arts: Chamber Music Series, 7pm
At the Community Presbyterian Church, Three Rivers. This month's program is "Tomorrow's Stars Today," featuring a select group of prodigy musicians from the Colburn Conservatory of Music. Tickets: $12 (children and the parent accompanying the child admitted free). info@ThreeRiversPerformingArts.org; 561-1100

February 1: Farewell Reception Honoring Dr. Craig Wheaton, 3:30-5pm

FEBRUARY

Dr. Wheaton has accepted a posion as Deputy Superintendent for Tulare County Office of Education. His last day with VUSD is February 1. Please join us in the VUSD Board Room, 5000 W. Cypress Avenue in Visalia, as we wish him well and thank him for his 14 years of service to the VUSD community! Monday, February 1, 2016
There is no set program, drop in anyme between 3:30pm and-5pm.

February 1: Square Eights Hall dance lessons, 7pm
Learn to square dance at Square Eights Hall, 11555 Fargo Avenue in Hanford. If this is your first time round the floor its free. The first class is free. Couples and singles age 8 to 99 years are welcome to join. Wear comfortable shoes and clothing. Meet new friends. Refreshments provided. Cost is $4 for adults and $2 for teens. For any questions call 582-1640 and leave message.

February 5: Art reception, 6-8pm
The Brandon-Mitchell Gallery will hold a reception for artists LInda Grasse and Chuck" Ed" Berry. Located in the Center for Spiritual Living, 117 S. Locust, Visalia (one block south of Main), 559 625-2441 or www.cslvisalia.com

February 5-21: 'Dogfight' at the Ice House Theatre
A hauntingly beautiful musical about three young Marines having a night out before being shipped to Southeast Asia. Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Sunday at 2 p.m. Ice House Theatre, 410 E. Race, Visalia. www.visaliaplayers.org

February 7: Hanford Cow Run, 7am
The Hanford Cow Run is excellent for beginners and experienced runners. Runners or walkers who sign up for the race should have the chance to record excellent times, as the course is primarily flat. The Half Marathon and 5k race share a start/finish line on North Mustang Drive across from Frontier Elementary School. Runners and walkers will commence at the same time. On race day you may park on the surrounding streets, however, do not park anywhere along the course. Start Times: Half Marathon, 7am; 5K 7:15am. A finishing time limit of 4 hours will be enforced and the course will be cleared by 11am. It is recommended that you pick up your bib on Saturday to save time on race morning and ensure you're ready to run at 7am. Photo ID is required to pick up your race packet. Packets will not be mailed to participants. If you are picking up a packet on behalf of someone else, you must have a written permission note from the participant along with a copy of their photo ID. You may also pick up your packet and check-in on race day between 5:30 - 6:30am at the check-in booth.

February 8: Be Heart Smart: Interactive Forum on Women and Cardiac Health, 5:30-7:30pm
At the Gateway Church, 1100 S. Sowell Street in Visalia, Kaweah Delta is partnering with 210 Connect and the American Heart Association to help you get expert answers to health questions with a free cardiac health forum titled "Be Heart Smart." Moderated by journalist Paul Hurley, this informative and supportive community health event will feature a panel of health experts and community members who will provide a comprehensive picture of heart disease– from prevention to diagnosis, linked health concerns including stroke and stress, as well as recommended nutrition and exercise. This event focuses on making women's heart health a top priority during Go Red for Women - Heart Disease Awareness Month in February. Women and men are invited and encouraged to ask health questions to the panel and join in the discussion.

February 10: Way Back Wednesdays--Classic Flicks at the Fox, 7pm
On the second Wednesday monthly through April, 2016, the Visalia Fox Theatre presents a classic film. Admission is $5 and includes a small popcorn. Tonight: Notorious, 1946.

February 13: Love Our Kids 5k Fun Run, 8:30am
The second annual Love Our Kids 5k Run, benefiting the Strathmore Boys and Girls Club, is a timed event at the expansive Porterville Sports Complex. Walkers are welcome to participate. Since this event raises funds for our youth, family groups are encouraged to participate. Unique medals will be awarded to the first - third place finishers in various age divisions. Costumes are optional, however, there will be special prizes for Valentine themed attire. The first 150 adult registrants (14 and over) are guaranteed our exclusive 2016 Love Our Kids t-shirt and a goodie bag. Adult registration fee: $30 - participants 22 and over ; student registration fee: $20 - ages 14 to 21. Child registration: free - 13 and under with onsite completed waiver. Online registration deadline February 10. Free parking available at the Porterville Sports Complex. Check-in and packet pick-up: 8:30am day of event. Race time: 9:30am, rain or shine, no refunds.

February 13: Lions Club Valentine's Dinner and Dance, 6pm-midnight
The Lions Club of Corcoran is hosting their Valentine Dinner and Dance at 1007 Van Dorsten Avenue in Corcoran. There will be dinner, dessert, drinks, a DJ, a no host bar, door prizes and raffles all night long! Tickets are: Pre-sale $30/couple and $20/single. For more information contact Tammy Jackson at 559-362-5871.

February 20: Tulare County Symphony presents Great Movies/Great Music: Escapes and Escapades, Doors: 6:30pm/Show: 7:30pm
Great Movies/Great Music: Escapes and Escapades, featuring the music of John Williams, Hans Zimmer and Danny Elfman. This popular series returns with music from the great adventure films, showcasing music from some of today's (and yesterday's) most popular and exciting composers. The music of John Williams takes center stage, joined by two other Rock Star composers and Hollywood heavy-weights, Hans Zimmer and Danny Elfman.

February 20: A Night of... Wine, Cheese, & Chocolate, 6:30-8pm
Are you still thinking of what to give your sweetheart for Valentine's Day? Surprise him or her with an ele-gant evening out, sampling a wide va-riety of fine wines, cheeses, and choc-olates.
On Saturday, February 20th, Tulare Historical Museum's ever growing and popular "A Night of...Wine, Cheese, & Choco-late!" is back by popular demand. The event takes place under the backdrop of the Museum's Historical and Art Galleries. Tickets are $35 per person, and can be purchased either by calling the Mu-seum, online at www.tularehistorical museum.org , or by speaking with any of our Board Trustees. Tickets are limited for this event, so be sure to purchase them soon.

February 21: Wine & Dine, a Fundraising Dinner in Support of Habitat For Humanity, 5pm
Chef Karl Merten, owner of Cafe 225, hosts a dinner where wine will be paired with each course for the maximum flavor experience. At Cafe 225, 225 West Main Street in Visalia. Tickets are $60 each. For more information, call Deanna at 734-4040.

February 25: Brian Regan, 7:30pm
A night of comedy at the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets $30, $35, $40, $45.

February 27: Johnny Rivers, 7:30pm
At the Visalia Fox Theatre. Tickets $25-$70, benefitting Hands in the Community.

Send your calendar items to: editor@ourvalleyvoice.com

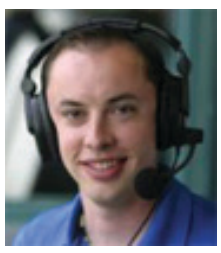
Sports

Offseason with the Rawhide Broadcaster

Stefan Barros

An offseason work day with Visalia Rawhide broadcaster Donny Baarnes is just like any other persons' who works in an office building. Work days in offseason go from 9am-5pm, and start about a week after the season ends for the Rawhide.

"By the time the season ends, we're ready to get back to the office and ready for a 9-5. But by the time the offseason is over, we're ready for the change. It really is the perfect balance between offseason schedule and regular season."


Donny Baarnes

So what exactly goes on at the Rawhide offices during this 9-5 schedule? Baarnes went over some of the aspects that go into a day with Rawhide in the offseason, "We usually have Monday meetings to plan out what we'll be doing for the week. It's a sort of brainstorming session. All of us have a responsibility, but then we collaborate."

Baarnes admits that big portion of the offseason is spent working on promotions for the next season and trying to bring back season ticket holders.

"We do a lot of work on sales; sponsorship sales to be specific. We work on expanded pass holders and finding more people to buy ticket packages, along with getting last year's season ticket holders to renew for this coming season. In the offseason we also sell company boxes, sell seats in the saloon, which are already sold out through the first two months of the season."

Baarnes talked about whether the success from last season has gotten people's attention in the area, "Last year definitely got a lot of people excited about this team again. It was just tough the way it ended in game five with the controversial home run call. It was a great season, though."

Being that Baarnes was able to be with the team for every pitch of the season, he has a great inside look at the team. He talked about what it was like to be with the 2015 Rawhide that had the best regular season record in the California League and how the team rests in history.

"I've done a lot of research on the history of this team, and for the team to start 30-10 and have the best record to start a season in team history was special. It was a special team right out of the gate."

Aside from his full-time role with the Rawhide, Baarnes also does work for the MLB Oakland Athletics in Spring Training, starting in 2013, after having worked six spring training games for the Diamondbacks in 2012.

"It's been a privilege to earn a paycheck from a Major League club, even if it's not from the regular season," he said."It's been the realization of a big time dream of mine. Some of the things I've learned though is just how challenging spring training games can be. There are a lot of players to track, games can drag on and I'm working alone. It can be challenge to try and keep the games interesting. You spend a lot of time preparing for these games. I enjoy it though."

With the season the Rawhide turned in last season there were sure to be some great memories as an announcer, and Baarnes talked about few of those that stand out.

"A couple of the big ones are the fact the we started with a 30-10 record, and the fact that it was the best start in team history," he said."The other was having three players make the big leagues the same year the played with the Rawhide. That just shows how loaded the team was."

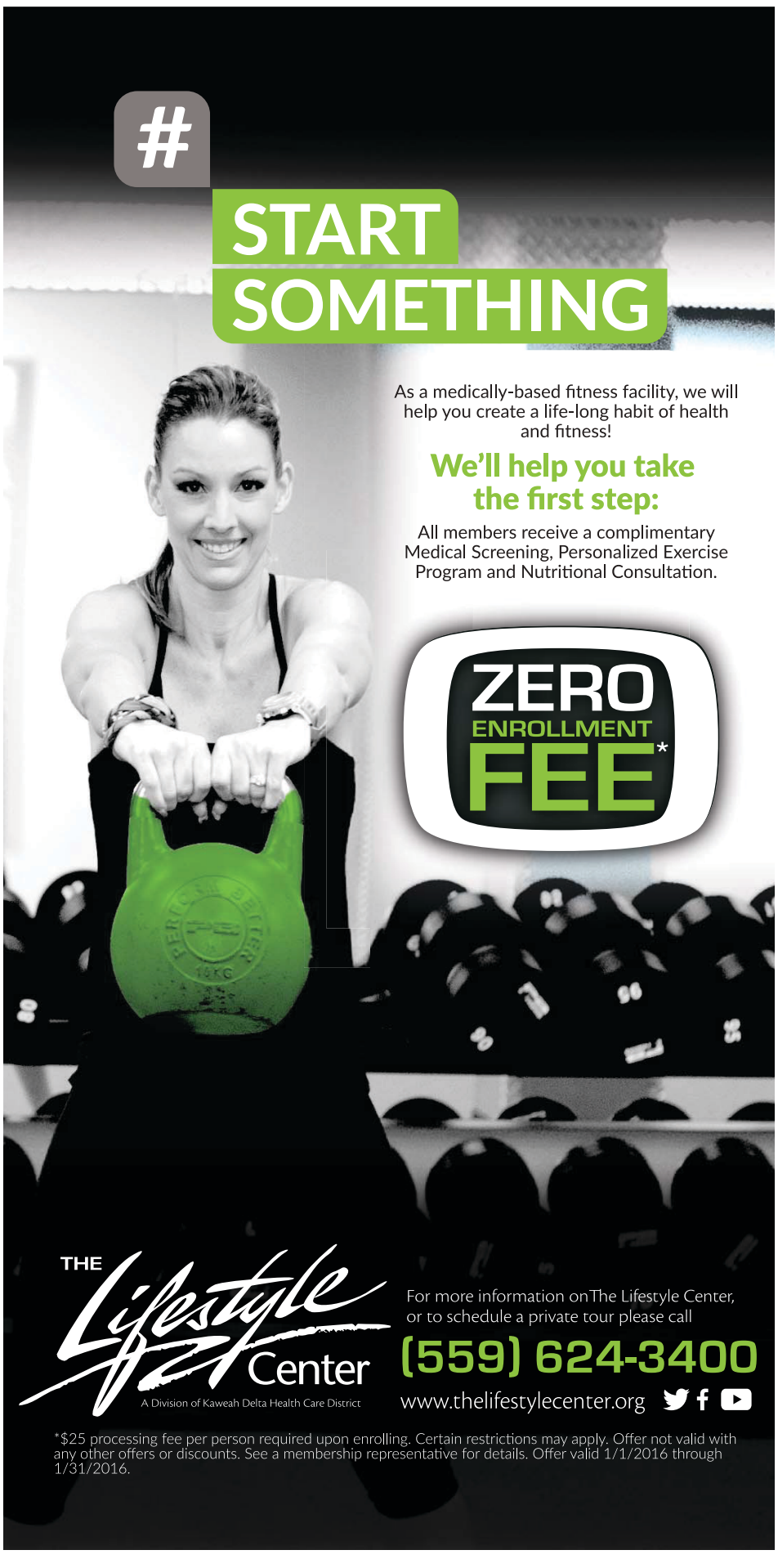
Looking ahead to next season, Baarnes said he is excited, and cites one big carry over from last season that will be very important for this coming season.

"J.R. House will be back as manager. The players loved him, and he stresses winning at the minor league level, as does the Diamondbacks organization. He demands that the players try to win."

Baarnes also expanded on the topic, talking about what he might expect the roster to look like come opening day.

"You never know until you get the roster the week before the season starts, but this is an organization that has talent and stresses winning to its minor league clubs."

The so-called "9-5" schedule ends for the Rawhide staff will end when they open the season on Thursday, April 7 by playing on the road at the Bakersfield Blaze. The Rawhide will open their home schedule on Thursday, April14--also vs. the Bakersfield Blaze.



Rawhide Shares New Coaching Staff

Staff Reports

Reigning California League Manager of the Year JR House will return to Visalia in 2016, the Arizona Diamondbacks announced.

Arizona also sends former Major League pitcher Jeff Bajenaruto Tulare County as the team's pitching coach, while veteran professional Vince Harrison takes over as hitting coach. Javier Colina will be the first Rawhide bench coach.

House, 36, played in parts of five Major League seasons for the Pirates, Astros and Orioles, and enjoyed 12 professional seasons overall; he made his Big League debut in 2003, and retired after the 2011 season.

House led the Rawhide to an 86-54 regular season record in 2015, and won both halves in the North Division. The club's First-Half crown was their first since 1990. Lauded for his energy and ability to bring the best out of his team, House was named the league's top manager, marking the seventh time a Visalia skipper has claimed the award. This will be his third managerial season overall. He originally hails from Charleston, West Virginia.

Bajenaru, 37, makes his Visalia debut as pitching coach in 2016. Bajenaru is from Pomona, and was a 36th round selection by the Chicago White Sox in 1999. He made Major League appearances with the White Sox in 2004 & 2005, and also came up briefly with the D-backs in 2006. He spent last year at short-season Missoula, where he helped guide the Osprey to a Pioneer League championship, and begins his sixth coaching year in the D-backs farm system.

Harrison also begins his first season as Rawhide hitting coach, and his third in the D-backs organization. The 36-year-old Lexington, Kentucky native spent parts of nine seasons in the Minor and Independent Leagues. He is the older brother of Josh Harrison (a 2014 All-Star with the Pittsburgh Pirates), and is the nephew of two-time World Series champion, John Shelby.

Colina, 36, enters his first year in Visalia as well. He spent last season in Hillsboro, and is in his third with the Diamondbacks. Colina played in parts of 14 minor league campaigns, and logged more than 5,000 professional at-bats.

The Rawhide will seek a fourth consecutive playoff appearance in 2016, after advancing to at least the League semi-finals each of the past 3 seasons.

"JR was a fantastic leader of our on-field team in 2015, and we look forward to having him back," said club General Manager Jennifer Pendergraft. "We're excited about the rest of this great staff as well, and we're also proud to celebrate our 10th season with the Arizona Diamondbacks, who have been a great partner to the ballclub and the Visalia community."

The Rawhide begin their 2016 season at Bakersfield on Thursday, April 7; they'll open their home schedule on Thursday, April 14 against the Blaze. For ticket information, call (559) 732-4433 ext. 1.

Two Displays Open with Artist Reception at Kings Art Center, January 29

Staff Reports

Stanford artist Sukey Bryan presents paintings, monotypes, etchings, and sketches of Denali National Park and Prince William Sound, Alaska in Glacial Visions with an artist reception in the Marcellus Gallery of the Kings Art Center on Friday, January 29.

Bryan was born in New Jersey, grew up in Connecticut and France, and graduated from Yale University with a BA in fine arts and English. At Yale, Bob Reed, professor of painting, was an important influence in her development. After graduation she worked in New York City and San Francisco as a graphic designer and began painting on weekends and evenings.It was at this time that she turned to a life in the fine arts and attended the Maryland Institute of Art, graduating with a MFA.

Bryan then received a grant for the Maryland Arts Council and with the support of a subsequent fellowship from the National Endowmentfor the Arts in 1993, Bryan painted a series of work based on the environments of Iceland and the Outer Hebrides of Scotland. Her interest in the volcanic nature of the Icelandic landscape led to several years of work that explores the interactions between natural elements (lava, water, gases, and rock) during seismic activity.

A resident of California since 1997, Bryan has created works that examine aspects of the surrounding natural eco-system in particular, wildfires, ocean tides, waves, and shallows, winter rains and grasses. During the summer of 2008, she was artist in residence at Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska. This summer residencybecame the source of five years of work and more than 100 paintings and prints that explore the Alaskan glacier ice cycle, from snow to ice to melt-water. This work, exhibited from California to Moscow and now on display here, celebrates the natural ice cycle that is jeopardized by the rise in atmospheric temperatures.

When asked about her Denali experience Sukey replied; "I lived and worked alone in the East Fork Cabin, in the middle of Denali National Park and Preserve. I was surrounded by the most vast and unaltered landscape I had ever seen. Each day I sketched, painted and photographed the area surrounding the cabin, and in the evenings read about its ecosystem including Adolph Murie's pioneering study of the localwolf population, which he conducted from that same cabin.

"This enormous valley has been carved and gouged out of glacier runoff over the millennia. And the ecosystem is completely dependent for survival to this day on the melt water of the braided rivers that run along the valley floor. The melt water is the lifeblood of the park. Glacier ice is a major force in Denali's formation and continuing environment.

"While in Alaska I also visited Prince William Sound, where I could get up close to the glacier ice. I spent five days photographing and sketching the ice, soaking up its appearance at different times of the day and in all kinds of weather.This same area was devastated by the Exxon Valdez oil spill in 1989, and the ecosystem is still in the process of recovery.So, I was simultaneously enthralled by the exquisite beauty of the ice and the land and deeply troubled by a history of human neglect and ongoing threats to this environment."

Bryan lives and works on the Stanford University campus with her husband and two sons.

Photographer Peter Pollock was born and raised in England, moving from there with his family to Hanford 10 years ago. Although he enjoyed photography as a child, especially abstract and action shots, his interest waned until just a couple of years ago, when he got back behind the lens to rediscover the creative fun of the camera.

Pollock is a published author, with several books to his name, including one in the popular "for

Iceberg (48x72, Oil on Linen) by Sukey Bryan

Fire in the Air, photograph, by Peter Pollock.

Dummies" series. His passion with his camera though is to capture the beauty we may not see around us every day and open our eyes to some of the incredible things that we miss.

Whether it is freezing a fountain with a fast shutter speed or zooming in to study the intricacies of a flower, Pollock's work attempts to reveal what is often kept hidden from the naked eye and encourage the viewer to stop for a moment to marvel at the beauty which exists even in the smallest details of the natural world.

The opening reception for both exhibits is Friday, January 29 from 5:30-7:30pm. The regular exhibition opens on Saturday, January 30 and runs through March 19. Regular gallery hours are Wednesday-Friday 11am-4pm and Saturday-Sunday 12-3pm. Admission is free and tours are available by appointment.

The Kings Art Center is located at 605 N. Douty Street in Hanford. For more information, call (559) 584-1065.

Bank of the Sierra Run Funds Local Non-Profit; Inspires Fitness for New Year

Bank of the Sierra held its fourth annual Rockin' Resolution Run on New Year's Day. The annual run aims to inspire community members to make fitness goals for the New Year, while also creating community awareness. In its fourth year, the run has now raised more than $30,000 for local charities.

Low temperatures in the 30s didn't deter nearly 330 runners from participating in the race, including 51 children showing up for a one-mile kid's race.

Over the past three years, the local run has partnered with Visalia Rescue Mission, a local homeless outreach organization which serves the community through offering food and shelter and other programs for men, women and children in need. The group serves an average of 130 people each night. All net proceeds for the event, totaling over $6,000 this year, went to the Mission.

Mike Olague, chief banking officer for Bank of the Sierra and presenter of the check to the Visalia Rescue Mission, expressed his gratitude to the organization. "Bank of the Sierra's promise is to help make every community we're a part of better, and we're honored to partner with the VRM to assist in their service. We're also pleased to be able bring anenjoyable event to the Visalia community."

Runners

Continued from p. 17

leukemia-myeloma," he said.

Salgado began participating in the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society Run for the Cure. Since, he has run in honor of some friends as well. But, although diagnosed with kidney cancer himself, in 2012, he has not run for himself.

"I have not ever put myself down as a survivor," he said. "I would rather run for someone else."

Salgado's cancer was found by accident while investigating gall bladder problems he was having. He had surgery to remove his tumor in 2013, and remains in remission.

Now, he is also giving back by training others.

"It was time for me to expand my teaching and get more people involved," he said.

The Sole 2 Soul running group has about 20 members with five coaches, training for 5K, 10K and half-marathon runs. Training is held Saturdays at Plaza Park with run/walks, and Wednesdays at the College of the Sequoias track with emphasis on core and leg strengthening as well as how to prevent injuries.

Aubrey Brown's mom, Alicia Brown, a runner herself, is pleased with the training her daughter is receiving. Children do not always want to learn from their parents, she said. Sometimes it is easier for them to learn from someone else.

"I wanted her to do something she likes," Alicia said. "There are not enough activities like this for children, without so much emphasis on placing first, or improving at a certain sport."

Alicia also expressed a concern about how many girls in her daughter's age group have concerns about weight issues and their appearance.

"I don't want her to feel their pressure," she said. "I just want her to have fun."

Meanwhile, Aubrey looks forward to running with her mom, she said.

"I really want to start running a little faster, so I can run with my mom," she said.

The running group training is managed by Sole 2 Soul Sports in Visalia. For more information, call (559) 627-5522.

Two Local Artists Featured at Brandon-Mitchell Gallery

Donna Orosco

"Expressions in Art," an art show featuring local artists Linda Grasse and Chuck "Ed" Berry, opens Jan. 8 at the Brandon-Mitchell Gallery with an artists' reception from 6-8 p.m.

Located in the Center for Spiritual Living, the artist reception will be during the First Friday Art Walk on February 5 from 6-8 p.m.

Linda Grasse will be showing her latest works in expressionism. She has been studying with local artist Abby Rubenstein using soft pastels.

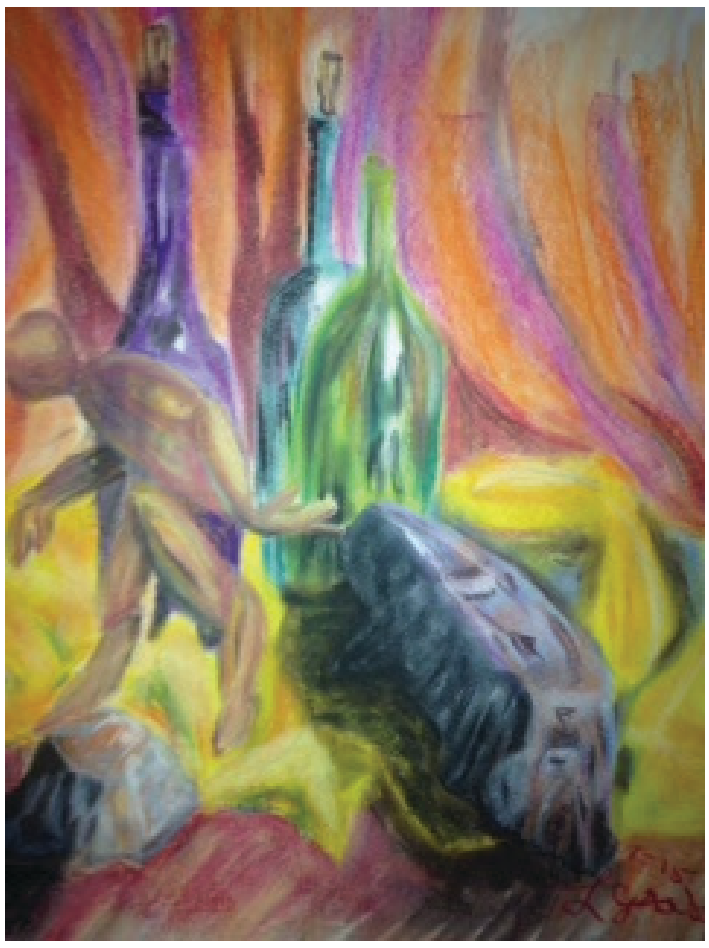
"To express art is a relief and has helped me learn how to focus on a subject and express what is me, the definition of what I am," she said.

Grasse, the daughter of recently retired minister Kathleen Scott, began painting with pastels in high school, where her teacher exposed the class to a variety of artists.

Later, she took up oil painting in Costa Mesa. She had several shows at the Church of Religious Science there. Before moving to Visalia last year, she lived in Reno, where she studied with David McCamant at the Nevada Museum of Art. He taught realism and how to play with light.

With Rubenstein, Grasse is creating still-life paintings that express how she feels at the time. She began teaching pastels to mental health clients in December.

"Blue Horns & Antlers" by Chuck Berry



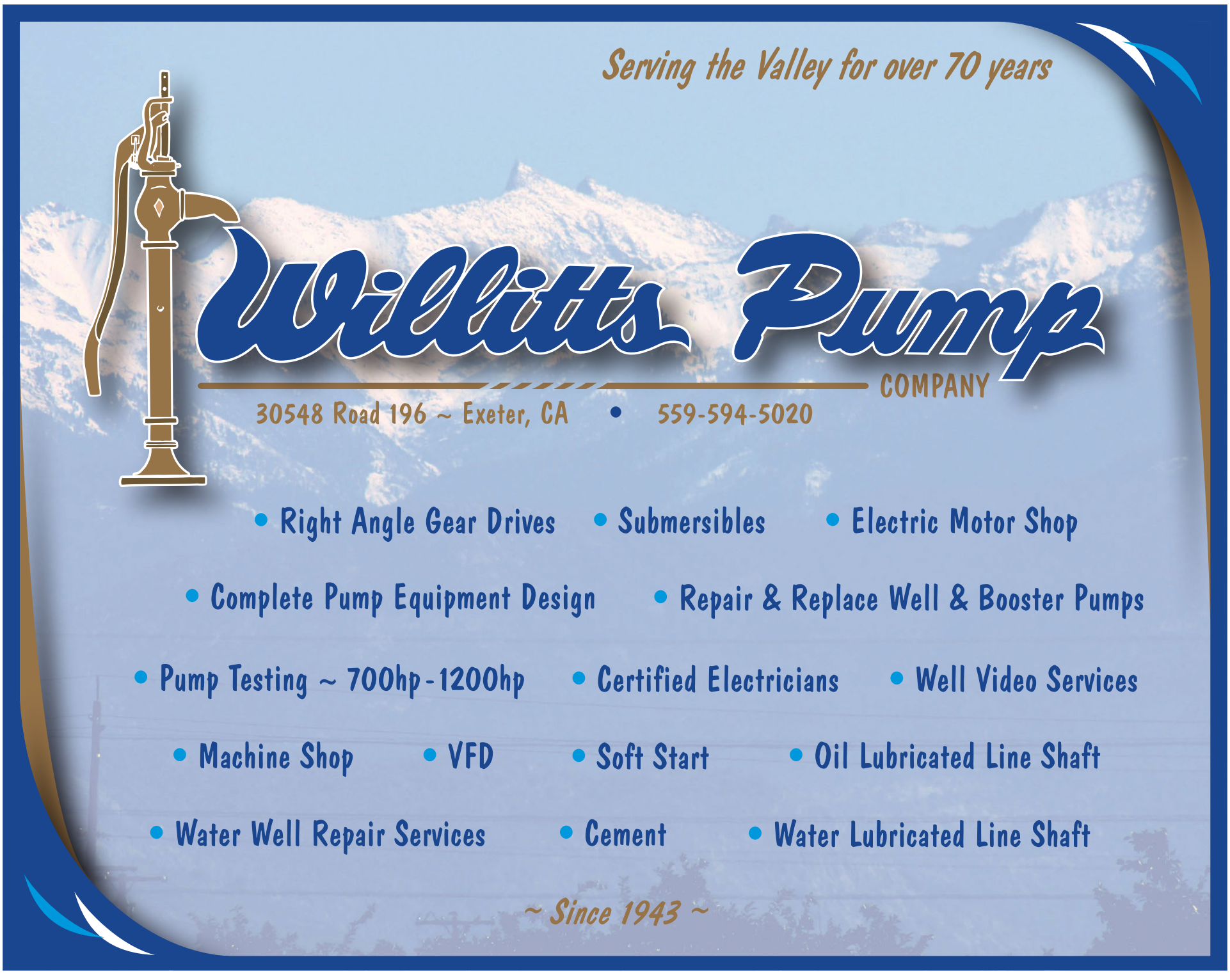
"Can't Get Far Enough" by Linda Grasse

Chuck "Ed" Berry is a very eclectic artist. His part of the show will include photography, paintings, drawings and ceramics. He majored in art in college, minoring in photography, and found they worked well together.

"Having an 'eye' for composition works in both studies. Being able to draw in correct proportion and perception and compose a photo in the like fashion goes hand in hand," he said.

He says being color blind doesn't affect his art. He worked for Josten's for 20 years doing art scanning where he learned how to use PhotoShop, Illustrator and other graphic programs. Recently he's been more interested in digital art and sculpture.

He says he creates things because he likes them, and that is a wide range—from a lamp sculpture that depicts a lizard to a digital collage showing the horror or war to art that reflects the gentle side of life.

On Facebook at facebook.com/ourvalleyvoice

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